PUZZLED AND PLEASED

OR, THE

TWO OLD SOLDIERS:

And other Tales.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

FRANCIS LATHOM,

AUTHOR OF

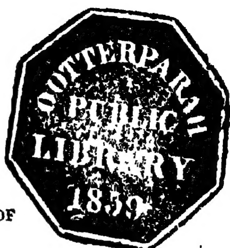
THE MYSTERIOUS FREEBOOTER, UNKNOWN, VERY STRANGE BUT VERY TRUE, MEN AND MANNERS, ROMANCE OF THE HEBRIDES, LONDON, MYSTERY, ONE POUND NOTE, IMPENETRABLE SECRET, HUMAN BEINGS, ITALIAN MYSTERIES, ASTONISHMENT, FATAL VOW, MIDNIGHT BELL, &c. &c.

For modes of faith let angry zealots fight—
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right. POPE.

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CONTINUATION OF THE TALE OF

PUZZLED AND PLEASED.

CHAPTER I.

THE succeeding post to that by which Mrs. Sandford had received the friendly epistle of Jedediah Trimbush, brought her a few lines, penned by the hand of Georgina herself. She was, she said, very unwell, and almost incapable of writing; but she had constrained herself to compose a short letter, conscious how satisfactory a confirmation of her safety, in her own hand, would prove to her friend—that friend to whom she could never forget that she owed her

 first

first preservation from the machinations of the unprincipled being, from whose entanglements she had now a second time been so providentially liberated.

This letter, at the injunction of Mr. Fayerman, Mrs. Sandford immediately carried to Mr. Levingston. It must be unnecessary to explain the feelings with which he perused, and the delight with which he contemplated, the characters which were traced by the hand of his child; but the effects of his joy appeared for a time almost as threatening as those which had formerly been produced by the excess of his grief; violent fits of laughter, intermixed with tears, for a while succeeded each other; whilst his soul, wrapt in contemplation of the paper which he held in his hand, appeared insensible to every other object. At length his fragile frame, overpowered by mental fatigue, sunk into an easy and refreshing slumber, the first which he had enjoyed since he had become acquainted

quainted with the existence of his child. Mr. Fayerman placed himself by the side of his bed, and directed every other individual to quit the chamber.

For nearly three hours he slept; when he awoke, his features were serene and composed.—"Oh, my friend!" he said, addressing Mr. Fayerman, "have I only enjoyed a delusive dream, or is it indeed a reality that my child is well and happy?" and before Mr. Fayerman could reply, drawing from under his pillow Georgina's letter—"Yes, yes," he said, "I recollect it all—it is a fact—she lives, and she is blessed. Oh, merciful Heaven!" he added, "after so many years of suffering and regret, for what ecstacy hast thou ultimately reserved me!"

Mr. Fayerman, with a fervour natural to his honest heart, congratulated him on his felicity, but besought him, in consideration of his weak state of health,

to husband his joy, and to compose his feelings, as much as possible.

"My dear James," he replied, "fear not that my health and strength will now hourly increase. Do you not remember, when, a few days ago, you advised me to consult a physician, that I answered you, there was no physician for the mind? I was mistaken; Heaven, in its benevolence, has given me a physician for the mind, and I now perceive only perfect health and contentment in the perspective of life."

He rang for his servant, and desiring Mr. Fayerman to descend to the dining-room, said, he would rise immediately and join him there. In the course of a few minutes he entered the apartment, but with a countenance so changed, that Mr. Fayerman was almost at a loss to believe that he was contemplating the features of his old friend, whose constant characteristic of melancholy had now

given

given place to the smile of pleasure, and the eye which beamed satisfaction. A hearty shake of the hand was exchanged between them, and Mr. Levingston then said—"You cannot doubt that I am anxious to transport myself to Ashby Park; and to-morrow morning early I intend to set out—will you accompany me?"

"There are few things that I would refuse you," answered Mr. Fayerman, "but this request I must decline. Recollect, my old friend, that though lady Sydenham and her cousin are old acquaintance of yours, they are strangers to me; besides, I am not much accustomed either to leaving home, or to visiting in high life, and the restraint of both would render me in some degree uncomfortable. No, no; do you proceed to Ashby Park alone, and when your first transports at meeting are over, and the events which have naturally arisen from so long a separation have

been fully recapitulated, then send me word where to see you, and I know nothing that can give me greater pleasure than an introduction to your daughter."

Matters were accordingly arranged in conformity with Mr. Fayerman's plan, and on the following morning, at six o'clock, Mr. Levingston, accompanied by his servant, set out for Ashby Park. On arriving at the village in which it was situated, Mr. Levingston alighted at the inn, and sent his servant to the Lodge, with a note addressed to lady Sydenham, which he had written previously to his quitting Richmond: the contents were these:—

"A gentleman, formerly resident in Bengal, and who had at that time the honour of enjoying the intimate acquaintance of lady Sydenham, requests her permission to call upon her, and earnestly solicits, for important reasons, which

which shall be explained at their meeting, that no one may be present at their interview, except it be her relation, Mr. Cleveland."

In the course of half-an-hour his messenger returned with a billet directed to Mr. G. L. Not a little surprised to observe the initials of his name, he hastily tore open the paper, and read the following words, evidently traced with a trembling hand :—

"Many years have elapsed since I beheld it—I instantly recognise your handwriting; it is that of Godfrey Levingston. You cannot come to Ashby Lodge too soon for my wishes.

"Yours ever,

"HENRIETTA SYDENHAM."

In an agitation of mind which communicated itself to his every nerve, Mr. Levingston snatched up his hat, and directing his servant to point out to him the way to Ashby Park, he rather ran than walked towards the spot of his destination. On arriving at the Lodge he was ushered into an apartment, in which he found lady Sydenham alone, waiting his arrival; and the moment the door was closed upon them, advancing towards him, with extended hands—"Godfrey!" she exclaimed—"oh, Godfrey! where have you been?—what is the reason that I have neither seen nor heard of you for so many years past?"

"Madam!—lady Sydenham!" in scarcely-articulate accents pronounced Mr. Levingston—then falling on his knees before her, and pressing her hand to his lips as he spoke—"mother of my child," he added, "accept a father's gratitude!"

The tears burst from the eyes of lady Sydenham,

Sydenham, and choked her utterance; she assisted him to rise, and leading him to a sofa, placed herself by his side; their eyes were directed towards each other, but an interval of several minutes elapsed, during which they were both incapable of speech. At length lady Sydenham spoke—"By what means," she said, "did you become acquainted with my residence?—how did you learn that your child was in existence, and under my protection?"

In as collected a manner as the irritation of his spirits would permit, Mr. Levingston recounted to her his intimacy with Mr. Fayerman, from whence had arisen his acquaintance with his niece, formerly Nancy Wilmot, and thence proceeded to a detail of those circumstances which are already known to our readers.

"How unparalleled an occurrence," observed lady Sydenham, "that you should become acquainted with the ex-

 istence

istence of your child, at a moment so agonizing to the heart of a parent as that of her abstraction from her friends and protectors! But whilst we have scenes of felicity to look forward to, we will not turn our thoughts to the melancholy retrospect of the sufferings and trials through which we have all passed. And now, my friend," she added, "in what manner does it appear most advisable to you, that she, who occupies the hearts and affections of us all, should be made acquainted with the happiness that awaits her in her introduction to you?"

"Before we deliberate on that subject," replied Mr. Levingston, "grant me a little farther conversation with you. You have hitherto known me and my story only partially; I wish now to relate it to you without disguise, and to be guided by your judgment how far it becomes me to disclose every circumstance connected with my own history,

and that of my late Elizabeth, to my child."

"I will give every attention to your detail," returned lady Sydenham; "and my best advice shall follow it—I say my best, for, believe me, it is from the heart, when connected with the interests of our Georgina—for so you must still permit me to call her. But before you enter upon your relation," she added, "tell me, where have you lived?—what has been your occupation since you quitted Bengal?"

Mr. Levingston briefly stated in reply, that upon receiving the intelligence of the death of his wife and child, he had retired into seclusion from the world, and heard little of the events which were passing in it.

"I suppose," returned lady Sydenham, "that Mrs. Sandford has fully detailed to you every particular relative to the fate of your daughter, since the period

riod of her being cast on shore from the wrecked vessel?"

Mr. Levingston replied in the affirmative, and lady Sydenham requested him to proceed to the narrative which he had expressed a wish to unfold to her.

In a few moments he commenced his account—" I am," he said, " the son and only child of a gentleman in the North of England, who bestowed on me an education of the most extravagant kind, and whose design it was to make me a physician. My father died suddenly; his establishment had been elegant, and he had vied in his style of living, his carriages, and, in short, in all the luxuries of life, with the first men of the county in which he resided, when, to my utter disappointment, and the surprise of all who knew him, after his decease, there was found to be scarcely sufficient property remaining to solve his debts. At the time of his death, I was under a promise of marriage to a young

young lady possessed of the most amiable and interesting qualities, who was an inhabitant of the same city in which my father dwelt, and between whom and myself an affection had existed for several years. The father of this young lady was a man descended from an ancient and wealthy family; and desiring his daughters to aggrandize both themselves and him by marriage, he had rather tolerated than freely consented to our proposed union; and upon this discovery of my father's affairs he seized as a fair occasion for breaking off our intended alliance. He wrote to me, forbidding me his house; and a few days after, I received a letter from his daughter, enjoining me to forget her, and informing me, that in compliance with her father's commands, she had promised not to see me again. Well acquainted as I was, equally with the excellence of her disposition, and her affection for me, I was convinced that she had sacrificed

her

her own inclinations at the shrine of duty; but I still forbore to attempt seeing her, for I loved her too tenderly to desire that she should unite her fate with that of a man who had experienced the sad reverse of fortune beneath which I had just fallen. After the funeral of my father, and the arrangement of his affairs, in the best manner in which it was found possible to settle them, collecting together what little property I possessed, which consisted chiefly of my wearing apparel, and a few trinkets of inconsiderable value, I resolved to change my name to that of Godfrey Levingston, and seek my fortune in the East.

"The particulars of my arrival in Bengal, and my reception into the service of sir William Sydenham, I need not, madam, repeat to you; the first circumstance which I have to explain is my abrupt departure one evening from the supper-table, at which I had been engaged in reading an English newspaper,

per, which had that day arrived by one of the Company's ships. It contained intelligence of the marriage of the young lady who had so long been the possessor of my heart. Whilst she had continued single, I had resolved never to marry; I had once vainly hoped that fortune might smile upon my endeavours, and that in the progress of time I might be enabled to return to her, in the affluence in which she had once known me: her marriage was a downfall to all my air-built hopes; indeed, had not the evidence of my senses convinced me of the truth of the case, so sincere had I believed her affection for me, that I should have found difficulty in crediting that she could have permitted any other man to have led her to the altar. But I was now for ever separated from her; and when the first excess of my grief for her loss began in some measure to subside, I conceived that the friendship which was constantly shewn me by Elizabeth,

might

might be matured into an affection capable of recompensing me for the privation which I had suffered; and I accordingly made her an offer of my hand.

"You cannot but remember, madam, that at my first proposal she objected to the apparent mystery in which she said she considered me to be wrapt, and that I requested a private interview with her, for the purpose of removing her doubts. At this interview I confessed to her, upon a promise of her secrecy, which I believe she faithfully maintained, my first love, and the circumstance which had so violently agitated me whilst perusing the English newspaper; she declared herself satisfied with my explanation, and accepted my suit. Oh, madam!—oh, lady Sydenham!" Mr. Levingston interrupted himself by saying, "had she acted towards me with the same candour with which I conducted myself towards her, she might still have been in existence, and every misfortune

which

which has befallen me and my innocent child averted."

"I am well aware," returned lady Sydenham, "to what you are alluding—fully conscious of what is passing in your heart; again and again did I entreat and admonish her to confess herself openly to you, as the surest method of gaining your esteem, and of living satisfied that she deserved it; but my arguments were in vain—I had no authority to command her, or to divulge what she did not permit me to unfold; but often have I since repented that I did not break through the rules of apparent friendship, and become what a real friend should, on such an occasion of importance, have displayed herself."

"You cannot, madam, have forgotten," Mr. Levingston pursued his narrative by saying, "that on the day appointed for my dear Georgina's christening, a regiment arrived in Bengal from a distant station, of which the officers were

were invited to join in the festivities of the evening. The same regiment had once been quartered in the city where my father had resided, and with the major I had been particularly intimate. I had scarcely entered the ball-room, when the very officer, of whom I have just spoken, approaching me, accosted me by my real name: I drew him hastily aside, explained to him the reverse of fortune I had experienced since we last met, and entreated him in future to know me only as Mr. Levingston. He promised to adhere to my wishes—congratulated me on the happy event which had succeeded my misfortunes, and we sat down together, enjoying the recollection and recapitulation of many scenes in which we had formerly been engaged.

"We had been in conversation nearly two hours, when Elizabeth passed near the spot where we were seated.—'Bless my soul!' exclaimed the major, 'how came

came that girl in the East, and joining in such an assembly as this too? To be sure you know who she is?' he continued—' the cast-off mistress of lord Augustus Deloraine; she had a child by him about six years ago!"

A pause ensued, but it was of the most eloquent sensibility. The tears chased each other down the cheeks of Mr. Levingston, and lady Sydenham gazed upon him with a sympathy which words could not have expressed.

" Conceive, madam, the agony of the situation in which I was placed!" Godfrey at length with difficulty pronounced: " distracted in my mind, and incapable of thought, I rushed to my chamber, and awaited the arrival of Elizabeth. After a time she came. The struggle of that moment I shall never forget; I loved her too much to relinquish her for ever; I respected myself too greatly to remain in open friendship with her, on a spot where her story was more

more than likely to be immediately blazoned. It was so new a task to me to upbraid her, for since our marriage, especially since the birth of our child, every day had strengthened my affection for her, that I could scarcely summon resolution to question her upon the truth of what I had heard. After many ineffectual attempts at utterance, I with difficulty said—'You have deceived the man who loves you; why were you not equally candid with me, as I have been with you?' She fell at my feet, and encircling my knees with her arms, falteringly pronounced—'Godfrey, Godfrey, have mercy on me!' This was to me an ample confession. I raised her from the ground, and placing her in a chair, said—'Fear not; it is not my intention to abandon you, but we cannot remain here. I shall immediately send you to England, and follow you myself as soon as I can leave sir William Sydenham with honour.' With every sub-

sequent circumstance you are as well acquainted as myself; you witnessed our separation. At that moment we both beheld Elizabeth for the last time."

A silence of a few minutes ensued; it was broken by lady Sydenham— "With regard to your own reverse of fortune, and the incidents connected with it, use your discretion, Godfrey," she said, "in revealing them to your daughter, or withholding them from her knowledge; but let me, as her second parent, entreat you to refrain from any disclosure which may tend to depreciate in her esteem the mother who bore her; whatever the errors of her former life, she was to her child affectionate and just; let not then that child, who experienced from her only maternal conduct, become acquainted that frailty ever existed in the breast of her parent."

Mr. Levingston highly applauded her advice, to which he assured her it should be his plan firmly to adhere; and it was

finally

finally agreed between them, that he should be introduced to his daughter as a friend of her father's, who had lately seen him; and lady Sydenham, on quitting the apartment to prepare Georgina for the proposed interview, enjoined him to subdue, as much as possible, the agitation of his spirits, till an apt opportunity should be presented to him for disclosing himself to his child.

In the course of a few minutes the door was thrown open, and Georgina, arrayed in all the sweet simplicity of Nature's charms, appeared entering. It was a sight which a father, in the peculiar situation of Godfrey Levingston, could not behold unmoved. The hectic tinge which had for a few moments before painted his cheeks, faded away; his lips quivered, and again the tears started from his eyes.—"My dear girl," said lady Sydenham, taking the hand of Georgina, and leading her forward to the sofa on which Mr. Levingston was still

still seated, "permit me to make you known to an old friend of your father's."

"My father is then in existence?" pronounced Georgina: "blessed be Heaven for the intelligence!"

"You were too young when you parted from him to recollect him, young lady," said Mr. Levingston.

"Oh yes, sir," answered Georgina; "I have no remembrance of him at all; but still, what delight would it give me to behold him! Is he well—is he happy, sir?—I beseech you to inform me."

"He is—he is," replied Mr. Levingston.

"Is he in England, sir?—will he soon come to visit me?" rejoined Georgina. "If he knew how tenderly I loved him, he would not long delay to solace me with his presence."

"You love him then affectionately," returned Mr. Levingston, "although you have never experienced the benefit of his protection?"

"I have

"I have experienced, sir, the want of his protection," answered Georgina; "kind as this inestimable friend, my second mother, has proved herself to me, strenuous as many other friends have been in defence of my helpless state, I still think, that had I possessed a father to call upon for the redress of my injuries, the villain who has so basely aimed at the root of my happiness and peace, would not have dared to practise his arts against me. Oh, could I but behold my father, I would cling round his neck—declare to him the affection with which my heart beats for him, nor quit him from my arms till he had promised never to leave his child again!"

Mr. Levingston rose, and clasping her to his breast, exclaimed—"I never will leave you again, my child—I never will, my child—I never will!"

"My father!" ejaculated Georgina, "are you my father?—is it indeed my father who presses me to his heart?"

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The eloquent eyes of lady Sydenham confirmed her suspicion; she imprinted her lips on his, and sunk fainting into his arms.

When the first transports produced by the ecstacy of their reunion were in some measure tranquillized, Mr. Cleveland entered the apartment, and renewing his acquaintance with Mr. Levingston, insisted that for the present he should make the Lodge his home, as he was convinced, he said, that the idea of Georgina being removed to Richmond, would, at the present moment, prove a matter of the most serious concern to lady Sydenham. The eyes of Georgina seconded the entreaty of Mr. Cleveland, and caused it immediately to be accepted. The evening was passed in the recapitulation of past occurrences, and in elucidating to each other many particulars in their eventful histories; and although they did not retire to rest till a late hour, the interesting conversation

in which they were engaged, caused them almost to imagine that they had scarcely been ten minutes in each other's society.

On the following morning, at breakfast, lady Sydenham, addressing Mr. Levingston, said—"My intimacy with Georgina is but of late date; she has had many friends in her orphan state, who are infinitely more deserving of your gratitude than myself. To two of the principal of these, you will very soon have an opportunity of being introduced, as they dine with us to-day. They are a colonel Thunderbolt, and a female relative of his, who reside only a few miles from hence." When she had concluded speaking, she observed that a tear had started into Godfrey's eye, and that he was endeavouring to hide his emotion, by lifting his tea-cup to his lips.—When their meal was concluded, following lady Sydenham to a window, which she was raising to give air to some plants that stood before it, and addressing

ing her in an under-tone of voice—"Has colonel Thunderbolt," he asked, "a wife?"

"No," replied lady Sydenham; "he has been for many years a widower."

"Then my first love," returned Mr. Levingston, "is no more; it was the announcement of her marriage with him, which so greatly agitated me whilst reading the English newspaper in Bengal."

"Are you known to each other?" inquired lady Sydenham.

"I never saw him in my life," was the reply.

"It is then at your option to keep your secret within your own breast," returned lady Sydenham; "but let me entreat you to suffer no recollection of the past to operate in his prejudice when you meet; for although a rough and extraordinary character, he has been a father to your child."

"You speak volumes in his praise," rejoined Mr. Levingston, "and I eager-

ly anticipate our introduction to each other."

About the hour of three, for he had promised an early visit, the colonel's carriage was seen rolling along the avenue leading to the Lodge; and the express purport of this visit was the enjoyment of a few hours in the society of Georgina, whom he still persisted in calling his daughter, notwithstanding the tardiness with which Frederick's wound was healing had hitherto prevented his leaving Portsmouth, and the meeting so anxiously desired by the colonel had not yet taken place between the parties, whom he had in his heart already united. His sole companion on this day was his sister-in-law, Miss Hewardine; for his daughter Clarentine, still uncertain of the fate of lord Augustus Deloraine, and but imperfectly reconciled to her father, though he had within the last fortnight paid her casual visits, and confined his upbraidings to a toler-

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able moderation of voice, refused to mingle with society, till some elucidation had been thrown upon the conduct of him in whom all her wishes were centered.

Lady Sydenham received them in the breakfast apartment, and having unfolded to them the joyful event which had marked the preceding day, she conducted them to the drawing-room, where Georgina and her father were waiting their arrival. Lady Sydenham entered first, and was followed by the colonel, whose rule it was always to take precedence of females, when they were members of his own family. The colonel's introduction being past, lady Sydenham led forward Miss Hewardine. Mr. Levingston started violently, and then appeared rooted to the spot on which he stood; whilst at the same instant—"Oh, Heavens! Louvaine!" burst from the lips of Miss Thomasine; and placing her hand in agitation before her eyes,

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she sunk into a chair near. to which she had been standing.

Consternation seized upon all present, and a silence of some instants ensued: it was broken by the colonel, with his usual volubility and bluntness—"What is that you say, sister Thom?" he exclaimed—"Louvaine!—what, the Louvaine that you——but it is impossible; lady Sydenham introduced this gentleman to us as Mr. Levingston—did not you, madam? Your name is Levingston—is it not, sir?"

"Thus taxed, sir," replied the gentleman addressed, "I have no hesitation in avowing that my name is not Levingston; it is one which I adopted at a moment of misfortune, not of dishonour, and I therefore do not blush to have borne it; but my real name is that just mentioned by Miss Hewardine—Louvaine."

"What, George Louvaine?" ejaculated the colonel.

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The reply was in the affirmative.

"And of York?" demanded the colonel.

"The same," was Mr. Louvaine's answer.

"Was there ever the like of this known upon the face of the globe!" cried the colonel, "that my sister's old respected friend should turn out to be the father of our dear Georgina! Give me your hand, sir; I have heard so noble a character of you, that I have respected you for these fifteen years past, without ever dreaming that it would one day be my lot to meet you, face to face, and tell you my sentiments."

Miss Hewardine rose from her seat; and taking the arm of lady Sydenham, left the apartment, followed by Georgina.

"Let her go—let her go," said the colonel; "she will be better when she comes back; women never perfectly recover a surprise of this kind till they have wept over it. She is an amiable

woman, I can tell you; but you know that as well as I do; and she loves you as much as ever she did, I can promise you. But more of that hereafter."

"Her appearance," returned Mr. Louvaine, "affected me with the greatest astonishment, for I believed her to have been your wife, and long since consigned to the tomb."

"No, no, no," rejoined the colonel, "my wife was her sister Eliza, as good a creature to the full as herself, Heaven rest her soul! She has been many years released from the cares of life."

"I was," returned Mr. Louvaine, "led into the error of believing Miss Thomasine Hewardine to have given you her hand, by having seen your marriage with *Miss* Hewardine announced in the public prints; and as no Christian name was prefixed, I concluded that it could not but be her, as she was the elder of the two sisters, and consequently entitled

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to the appellation which was there given her."

"No, upon my soul, it was her sister I married," cried the colonel; "but the newspapers are always committing some blunder or other, to drive people half mad with their carelessness, and I have almost determined never to read another since;" and he would have dilated into the error respecting lord Augustus Deloraine, which had appeared in the first impression of the Gazette, subsequent to the siege of Algiers, had not the opening of the drawing-room door, at which the ladies appeared re-entering, put a stop to his harangue.

Miss Hewardine now advanced with a firm step towards Mr. Louvaine, and extending to him her hand, said—"I am truly happy to see you again, and doubly so to congratulate you on the felicity which you enjoy, in possessing a treasure like the daughter to whom you are just restored."

 "Of

"Of the friendship which at an early period of my life I bore you," returned Mr. Louvaine, "I believe you never doubted the fervour or the truth; let me assure you, that neither absence nor disappointment have been able to eradicate it from my heart."

"It will be a match," whispered the colonel in the ear of Mr. Cleveland, with whom he had retired to a distant part of the room; "I will bet any body a rump and dozen they are married before the end of the twelvemonth!"

The conversation now became general, and Mr. Louvaine mentioned that the reason of his having changed his name to Levingston, had been the various mortifications to which he had been subjected at the death of his father, having rendered him desirous of passing through the future period of his life, unrecognized by any of his former acquaintance and connexions; and this explanation he followed by relating to Miss Hewardine

dine the error into which he had been led by the marriage of her sister with colonel Thunderbolt.

When the cloth was removed, and the ladies had quitted the dining-room—"Excuse my abruptness, sir," said the colonel, addressing Mr. Louvaine, "but permit me to ask you whether you have many relations of your own name?"

"Very few indeed, sir," answered Mr. Louvaine, "and those very distant ones, with whom I have not the slightest acquaintance. May I ask your reason for inquiring?"

"Certainly, sir, certainly," replied the colonel; "it is my wish to explain it to you;" and here followed an account of the transaction at the Montem, at which the benevolence and humanity of the captain, George Louvaine, had so deeply interested the feelings of the old soldier. "Now, sir," said the colonel, when he had concluded his account, "can you give me any information who the youth

could be, whom I beheld in the praiseworthy situation which I have just described to you, and whose name, I was afterwards informed, was George Louvaine?"

"I cannot form the most remote idea," returned Mr. Louvaine—"I do not think, of the few relations whom I do possess, that there is one so young as myself, and consequently it could not be one of them." After a pause—"I suppose, sir," Mr. Louvaine continued, "it is not unknown to you, that the family-name of the villainous lord Augustus Delcraine, by whose diabolical machinations we have all been so severe sufferers, is Louvaine?"

"The devil it is!" exclaimed the colonel; "and are they relations of yours?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied Mr. Louvaine; "and Heaven forbid that my blood should be stained by a connexion with such a race!"

"No, no," returned the colonel, after

a few

a few moments reflection, "the boy who excited my admiration at the Montem could not be lord Augustus Deloraine; a spirit like his could never animate the soul of a villain!" Again he paused.—"Will you have the kindness, when we join the ladies at tea, to ask Georgina to describe to me the person of lord Augustus Deloraine?" he said.

"We are all too intimate friends to stand upon the ceremony of an invitation from the ladies," observed Mr. Cleveland; "we will adjourn to the drawing-room when you please."

In the course of a few minutes accordingly they repaired thither; and Mr. Louvaine, leading Georgina aside to a window, in which the colonel had seated himself, desired her to give the description which he had requested. Tall, of a fair complexion, and with light hair, was the description which she drew of her persecutor. The colonel said—"that there was, undoubtedly, a like-

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ness in the portrait, the captain at the Montem having been of a fair complexion, and possessed of a remarkably-fine head of auburn hair, but that he never could believe, except on the conviction of his own senses, that so fine a youth could have been metamorphosed into a rascal."

The subject was dropt, and shortly after, the colonel, whose custom it was not to be late from home in an evening, ordered his carriage. When it was announced, the most affectionate farewells, and promises of frequently meeting, were exchanged by the assembled friends; and as he was quitting the apartment, the colonel, drawing aside Mr. Louvaine, said—"You will see me again very soon, sir; I have something very particular to communicate to you. I have got a husband for Georgina—one of the finest fellows in Great Britain. I shall consult you upon the business very shortly, but I cannot explain myself just now—good-night

night—God bless you!" and his immediate departure spared Mr. Louvaine the perplexity of a reply.

When the colonel and his sister were gone, Mr. Louvaine strolled into the library with his daughter; and availing himself of the opportunity of their being alone, inquired of her, who it was to whom the colonel had alluded in his parting address to him? Georgina explained to him the chimerical plan which the colonel had formed of uniting her to his son; and when she had concluded her account, she added—"And now, my dear father, let me beg of you, when he mentions the subject to you again, to put a conclusive period to his hopes."

"Do you then prejudge the young man, whom you have never seen?" asked Mr. Louvaine, smiling.

"Not so," replied Georgina; "I believe him all that his amiable sister represents him to be, but still——" She hesitated.

"Perhaps

"Perhaps his application comes too late?" said her father.

Georgina blushed, and hung down her head.

"My suspicions then are just," continued Mr. Louvaine.

"I can have no secrets from such a parent as yourself," replied Georgina, encircling his neck with her arm as she spoke, "for I perceive that you are the friend, as well as the father, of your child. My foolish heart has caught an impression, which, I fear, can never be effaced from it. I do not imagine that I shall ever again behold the object for whom my predilection has been awakened, but ——Do not question me just now; at another time I will explain all to you; but I am not at this moment prepared to answer you. Only this—believe me, that if ever chance should again bring into my presence the individual at whom I have just hinted, he is not of a rank to disgrace

disgrace my father by an alliance with his daughter."

"And his heart," asked Mr. Louvaine—"are you as well acquainted with that as with his rank?"

"I am convinced he loves me," answered Georgina.

"And are you equally convinced," rejoined her father, "that he is capable and desirous of making you happy?"

"I know little of him," returned Georgina; "I can only imagine that a countenance marked by the ingenuousness of his, cannot hold correspondence with an evil-disposed mind."

The entrance of lady Sydenham put a period to their conversation, and it was not resumed that evening.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN the colonel arrived at home, he was met at the door of the Hall by the serjeant, who placed in his hand a letter, of which he immediately perceived the direction to be in the handwriting of his son.—" Hurrah!" he exclaimed, " good fortune leads the van now; Heaven be praised, my boy is his own man again! he has given up his deputy-penmanship, and we shall soon see him here, no doubt of it." He retired to his study, and found Frederick's letter to contain the following words:—

" MY DEAR FATHER,

" I am happy to inform you that I am now nearly recovered from my

my wound, and that I hope, in the course of a few days, to be able to steer down on a short cruise to Thunderbolt Hall. Whilst I corresponded with you by proxy, I could not deliver my sentiments freely to you upon the proposal which you have been making me, of an alliance with a young lady, whom you name Miss Georgina Levingston. I neither doubt the excellent qualities of the young lady, nor your judicious choice, but I am sorry to inform you that our union never can take place. As I understand that you have experienced much uneasiness from my sister having married without your consent, I give you the word and honour of a sailor, that I never will follow her example; and that when I do become a husband, it shall be with your sanction, or not at all; but in return, dear father, let me hope that you will never press upon me an alliance to which my heart does not assent, and I assure you candidly that no existing being, but the

the one whose image is so indelibly imprinted on my mind, can be esteemed by me as a wife. Whether I shall ever see her again, Heaven only knows; but upon her, till the day of my death, will my affections be placed. I am very anxious to know what has become of lord Augustus Deloraine, and very sorry to find that you disapprove of Clarentine's union with him; for believe me, father, he is one of the finest and noblest fellows that ever wore blue. It was entirely my fault that we fought the duel in which I received the wound under which I am now suffering; I was, as I hinted to you in one of my former letters, a little tipsy at the time I affronted him; and I know he only did his duty in calling me out; but if ever I live to see him again, I should not think it a disgrace to beg his pardon on my knees, so generous and glorious a character do I esteem him! Believe me, dear father, that Clarentine has got a husband of ten

thousand;

thousand; and I beseech you to be reconciled to her immediately. If you could only once see his lordship, you would, I am certain, agree with me in opinion, and be happy to receive him as your son. In the course of a week, at the longest, I shall be with you; till when, and ever, dear father, believe me your affectionate son,

" FREDERICK TRELAWNEY."

The colonel read and reread the letter. It was a damp to his highly-raised hopes, and yet the refusal was so respectfully couched, that he almost felt it impossible to be irritated at the disappointment which had been cast upon his expectations.—" Well, well," he mentally pronounced, " Fred does not know what a fine girl Georgina is; let him once see her, and I have no fear but he will soon change his opinion; she has an eye that cannot fail to charm the heart of a sailor."

lor." He then proceeded to reflect on the excellent character which Frederick had drawn of lord Augustus Deloraine. He could not doubt the word of his son, and yet he found it difficult to reconcile the contradiction of the good name given him by Frederick, with the unmanly and ungenerous conduct which had been experienced from him by Georgina— "Was it not," he considered, "possible that there might be two lord Augustus Deloraines, and that the husband of his daughter, and the persecutor of Georgina, might be different persons?" It was an enigma which he could not solve, and he resolved to communicate the heads of those circumstances, which had lately militated against the peace of his family and connexions, to Mr. Delmar, and ask his opinion upon the subject, on which the more he reflected, the more his own ideas became distracted.

Accordingly, to the apartment of Mr. Delmar, who was now rapidly approaching

ing to a state of convalescence, and prevented only by the wound in his leg from quitting his chamber, he ascended, Trimbush following his steps, with a couple of bottles of old port, a clean pipe, and his box of Virginia.

Mr. Delmar listened attentively to his account, and appeared to take the most lively interest in his relation, which when the colonel had concluded—"There is no doubt," he said, "an impostor implicated in the case which you have been detailing; no person can know lord Augustus Deloraine better than I myself do, and I pronounce him to be a man of honour, incapable of the conduct with which your detail charges him."

"I have thought so myself," returned the colonel; "but what is to be done—what can be done to bring the offender to light? Pray, Mr. Delmar," he added, after a few moments pause in their conversation, "as you say that lord Augustus Deloraine is well known to

you,

you, are you acquainted whether his lordship's family-name is Louvaine?"

"It is," replied Mr. Delmar; "I can answer your question positively."

"Is it indeed!" replied the colonel; "well, it is very extraordinary—very extraordinary indeed; but you don't know what I am referring to; it is a circumstance which occurred many years ago, but which time will never obliterate from my memory. Were you ever at Eton? Do you know the place and the school?"

"Intimately," replied Mr. Delmar; "I was myself educated at Eton."

"You will have seen the Montem then?" rejoined the colonel.

"I have, sir," was the reply on the part of Mr. Delmar.

"So did I once," resumed the colonel, "and I shall never forget it to the longest day I have to live. I will tell you the circumstance that imprinted it on my memory;" and he proceeded to a relation

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lation of the occurrence which has already been detailed in our pages.

When he had concluded his account —"And are you indeed, sir," said Mr. Delmar, "the gentleman who so liberally rewarded the humanity of the captain at the Montem?"

"I can have no motive for deceiving you, sir," returned the colonel; "I am indeed the person, and I often look back to that day as one of the happiest of my life."

"I have often imagined, sir," answered Mr. Delmar, "since I have been enjoying the hospitality of your friendly mansion, that I had seen you before, although I could not charge my memory where we had met. Have you, sir, no recollection of my person?"

"Why, I have thought that I had some remembrance of it," returned the colonel, "but I cannot be positive—I cannot indeed. Why do you ask the question?"

"Because, sir," replied Mr. Delmar,

 "I am

"I am that very George Louvaine, who once had the happiness of so greatly interesting your feelings."

"You! you George Louvaine!" ejaculated the colonel; "it is impossible! and yet I don't know; there is an expression in your eye uncommonly like that youth; but your hair was a fine auburn then; it has grown much darker now; and your name—why have you changed your name to Delmar?"

"Should you, sir," returned Mr. Delmar, opening his pocketbook as he spoke, "know your bank-note again, were you to see it?"

"I should—I am certain I should," returned the colonel, "for I never received a note in my life without putting a private mark at the corner."

"There then, sir," returned Mr. Delmar, placing a note upon the table, "in that I think you will recognize your generous gift to the captain of the Montem; from that piece of paper I have resolved

solved never to part, for the veneration which I feel for the donor."

The colonel adjusted his spectacles to his brow, and eagerly examined the note —"It is!" he exclaimed; "by Heaven it is the very note which I gave to the captain of the Montem!"

"And by the same token, sir," said Mr. Delmar, "that captain was I!"

"Give me your hand," cried the colonel; and heartily shaking it, "God bless you, George Louvaine!" he proceeded by saying—"How I have longed to see you!—how often I have wished that it was but possible that I could once more fall in with you! and to think that you should have been above a month under my roof, without my discovering who you were.—George Louvaine! Heaven bless you! We have had more perplexities in our family about the name of George Louvaine than you can imagine; and though I have not yet introduced you to any of my relatives, late as the

 hour

hour is, you must permit me to bring you acquainted with an old maiden sister of mine; some very curious circumstances relating to your name make me anxious that you should be known to each other." He rang the bell, and the serjeant appearing to answer the summons —"Jedediah," he said, "go to my sister Hewardine; tell her to come hither directly; inform her that the real, identical George Louvaine, the captain of the Montem—the youth whom she has so often heard me describe to her with rapture and enthusiasm, is now sitting by my side, and that I cannot rest until I have introduced her to him."

During the absence of the serjeant, the colonel walked up and down the apartment, in the wildest agitation of mind, occasionally stopping, and fixing his eyes in admiration on the countenance of Mr. Delmar; frequently shaking him by the hand, and again and again exclaiming—"Good God! George Louvaine! Is

Is it possible?—Who could have thought it?—Mercy upon me, George Louvaine!" At length a footstep upon the stairs announced the approach of Miss Hewardine; the colonel opened the door, and went out to meet her—"Here, sister," he exclaimed—"here is another George Louvaine to claim your friendship and acquaintance—the captain of the Montem—the real George Louvaine, that time will never obliterate from my heart."

Miss Hewardine had now entered the apartment, and fixing her eyes on Mr. Delmar, she started, and rushing towards him—"Lord Augustus Deloraine!" she exclaimed.

"What do I hear?" ejaculated the colonel. "Lord Augustus Deloraine!—George Louvaine!—Ay, I recollect, Georgina's father said the family-name was Louvaine! And are you, sir, George Louvaine, or lord Augustus Deloraine, or whatever you may please to call your-

 self—

self—are you the man that married my daughter without my consent?"

The countenance of Miss Hewardine, without the acknowledgement which proceeded from the lips of Mr. Delmar, would have been sufficient to convince the colonel that his suspicions were just. He sunk into a chair, and began to whistle a favourite march.

Miss Hewardine retired to communicate the glad tidings of her husband's existence to her niece, and after a silence of some minutes had prevailed, lord Augustus Deloraine, for as such we must now acknowledge him, addressed the colonel—"Permit me, sir," he said, "to explain to you the mystery in which you have hitherto beheld me wrapt; and I doubt not to find favour with a mind generous and unprejudiced, as I have had many opportunities of perceiving yours to be."

"Damn it, I am not angry with you!" cried the colonel; "I cannot be angry

with you, George Louvaine—but why did you marry my daughter without asking my consent?"

Lord Augustus repeated the apologies which have already been made for his conduct by Miss Hewardine, and then proceeded to a detail of subsequent circumstances. He said that on his arrival at Portsmouth from Algiers, he had immediately applied to the Admiralty for leave of absence from his ship, anxious to embrace the wife from whom the hand of fate had so peculiarly separated him, on the very morning of their marriage, and whose apprehensions for his safety, he was well aware, must be of the most painful nature. He proceeded to say, that over a parting bottle which he had been taking with his brother officers, previously to his quitting his ship on his expedition of love, had occurred the unfortunate misunderstanding which had been the cause of his duel with Frederick, whom, he said, on

account of his name being Trelawney, and his never having heard him mention his family, he had not the most remote idea to have been the brother of his Clarentine.—"Lieutenant Trelawney's wound being at first apprehended to threaten his life," lord Augustus continued, "I was compelled to change my purpose of visiting my wife, to that of reaching London with all possible expedition, and secreting myself in the house of a friend till my antagonist should be pronounced out of danger; and unconscious that I was passing so near the spot of my Clarentine's residence, I was proceeding to London, when the accident occurred which introduced me beneath your hospitable roof."

"And why did you remain all this time beneath my hospitable roof," rejoined the colonel, "without telling me that you were my son-in-law? Own the truth—were you not afraid that I should drum you out of it, for the trick which

you

you had played me, in marrying my girl without asking my consent; and doubly so, I suppose, when you found the officer whom you had winged was my boy—is not this the true state of the case?"

"Partly so, sir, I confess," returned lord Augustus; "I wished you rather to gain the information of who I was from some adventitious channel, than from my own word; and as I was approaching to a state of convalescence, which promised speedily to enable me to quit my chamber, I was conscious that I should then be introduced to the ladies of your family, and that the discovery must immediately take place. The reason why I have now made it to you myself, somewhat earlier than I intended that my secret should have transpired, is from the necessity which I feel of rescuing my name, without delay, from the stigma which has been fixed upon it by the villain who has been imposing on the world by the assumption of my title. Lou-

vaine, sir, is the name of my family, and the one by which I was distinguished during the lifetime of my father; I have two Christian names, Augustus and George, which accounts for the appellation which you heard given to me at the Montem. And now, sir," added his lordship, "my confession being at an end, I hope to obtain your ready permission to an interview with my dear Clarentine."

"I dare say, my lord," returned the colonel, "that I have been represented to you as an ill-tempered, passionate old fellow, that never would forgive the step which you had taken with regard to my daughter. I am a passionate old fellow, and the devil of a rage I was in when I heard what had happened; but circumstances, arising principally from yourself, have operated so strongly in pleading your cause with me, that to prove to you that I can be considerate as well as displeased, take my pardon and my

blessing,

blessing, together with this shake of my hand."

"And your daughter, sir?" ejaculated lord Augustus.

"Why, you have got her already, have not you?" cried the colonel, relaxing his features into a smile of pleasure; "I cannot give her to you over again; but I will go and send her to you, for I dare say you would rather be convinced of your happiness by her lips than mine."

As he opened the door to leave the apartment, Clarentine and her aunt appeared approaching towards it. The long-separated husband and wife rushed into each other's arms, and for the first moments of their ecstasy evinced their felicity only with their tears.

"Let me get out of the way," cried the colonel, "or you will set me a blubbering too; I cannot bear these kind of things now—they unnerve me for a month together; when you begin to laugh and be merry, let me know, and

I will come back, and be as happy as the happiest of you; and, in the mean time, I will go and report the discovery which has just transpired to my faithful old friend Trimbush."

On the following morning, when the ardour of the joy experienced by lord Deloraine and his Clarentine, at their reunion with each other, had in some measure become tranquillized, and given place to the discussion of other subjects, their conversation naturally turned upon the false lord Augustus, and an explicit account of the atrocious conduct exercised by him against Georgina was now detailed to him by Miss Hewardine.

When she had concluded her narrative, lord Augustus maintained a few moments of silence, during which he appeared absorbed in the deepest thought.

"Have you any idea who the impostor is?" asked the colonel.

"I cannot say that I am entirely free from my suspicions as to the person who

may

may have made this daring attempt to improve his fortune," returned lord Augustus; "but as I have not the slightest proof that I am judging rightly, you must permit me to refrain from mentioning whom it is that I suspect, till I have taken measures, which I will promptly enter upon, for convincing myself how far my ideas may be erroneous or correct. If it should prove to be the man whom I suspect, it will, I confess, cause me no inconsiderable anxiety to discover that he has been guilty of the atrocities with which he stands charged; for although I allow that I feel some degree of interest in his fate, I will not be instrumental in shielding him from the punishment which his conduct so greatly merits."

Even to his beloved Clarentine lord Augustus maintained a strict silence relative to the suspected usurper of his title; but in the course of the morning

he dispatched several letters by the post, " a reply to some one of which," he said, " would, in the course of a very few days, clear the point in agitation."

Whilst her husband was thus employed, Clarentine eagerly seized the given opportunity for writing to her friend Georgina, and informing her of the happiness to which she was restored, earnestly entreating her to fix an early day for visiting the Hall with her father, and being introduced to her husband, which would afford her a proof of the imposition that had been practised upon her, in her having been led to imagine lady Lefanu's cousin Harley to have been lord Augustus Deloraine.

The colonel likewise found employment at his desk, in penning an account of the transactions of the last twenty-four hours to his son Frederick, whom he adjured to hasten, as much as possible, his visit to the Hall; not omitting to

tell him that he had still a presentiment, that the eyes of Georgina would work a change in his heart.

The first of these epistles to which a reply was received, was that of lady Deloraine; by Clarentine's messenger Georgina returned her an answer replete with congratulations on her unexpected happiness, and informing her, that as lady Sydenham and Mr. Cleveland were, on the following day, compelled to make a visit of ceremony, to which neither her father nor herself intended to accompany them, they would avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them for dining at Thunderbolt Hall.

The remainder of the day passed on unmarked by any event, except that the serjeant devoted himself, in the afternoon, to the exercise of his pen, in like manner as his superiors had been engaged with it during the morning, and composed an elaborate account of the unexpected discovery of the real lord Augus-

tus

tus Deloraine, which he dispatched to Mrs. Sandford.

At the appointed hour Georgina and her father arrived at the Hall. It was long since Clarentine and her friond had met—eventful and miserable days had passed with them both since they had last beheld each other, and they flew into one another's arms with the most unfeigned rapture.—"Now then," said Clarentine, "permit me to introduce you to the real lord Augustus Deloraine, and to convince you that it was a usurper of his lordship's title, to whom you owed your unmerited sufferings."

The countenance of Georgina immediately evinced that lord Augustus was to her a stranger. As she continued in conversation with Clarentine and her husband, the latter took occasion to inquire of her, whether the pretended lord Deloraine had not been a man of about thirty years of age, of a fair complexion, rather tall, and with light hair?

Georgina

Georgina answered in the affirmative; it was the exact description which she had given of him a few evenings before to colonel Thunderbolt.

Upon receiving her reply, lord Augustus withdrew himself for a few minutes from his wife and her friend, and took several turns of the apartment, during which some reflections of an unpleasant nature appeared to be passing in his mind. On his return to the window at which they were seated—"I have no doubt," he said, "that either on to-morrow, or the day after, I shall receive a letter which will clear this ambiguous case—so let us for the present dismiss all unpleasant recollections."

The colonel was in the height of happiness and good-humour; again and again he drank to the health of the bride and bridegroom, as he called Clarentine and her husband, and saying that they were a family-party, and must not that day be separated from each other, in-

sisted

sisted that the ladies should not quit the dining-room. Their conversation was principally on the past events of their lives, and the heart of the colonel being opened by the wine which he had swallowed—" Well," he cried, " I never meant to have spoken of it, but I am determined I will tell you now. Much as Georgina has suffered, I have been the greatest dupe in the villainous actions which have lately transpired; I have been capitally taken in for three thousand pounds; but I did it all for the best, and I would do it again, if my poor Georgina's safety and happiness were again at stake, as they were then, which Heaven forbid it ever should be! It was about a fortnight after Georgina was carried off from Ashby Park that I received a letter. But you shall see it."

He took one from his pocketbook, and placing it in the hand of lord Augustus, desired him to read it aloud.

His

His lordship complied, and it was found to contain the following words:—

"SIR,

"The person who addresses you is one who takes a most lively interest in the fate of the unfortunate Miss Levingston. If you will preserve inviolable secrecy with regard to the receipt of this letter, and will send the sum of three thousand pounds, enclosed in a blank cover, and directed for W. X., to be left at the General Post-Office, Lombard-street, London, not four-and-twenty hours shall elapse, after the arrival of your reward, before she shall be restored to you at Thunderbolt Hall."

"Well, sir," asked lord Augustus, "and did you comply with the request?"

"Yes, I did," returned the colonel; "I was afraid at the time it was a hoax, and

and yet I was so anxious to adopt any plan that appeared to hold out to me a hope of regaining our dear Georgina, that I was taken in, in spite of my better judgment. Yes, I sent the money, and never heard any more of my correspondent. You do not know the handwriting, my lord, do you?"

Lord Augustus remained attentively examining the characters, but did not speak.

Clarentine, who was leaning over his shoulder, requested to be permitted a closer inspection of the epistle; and receiving it from the hand of her husband —"It is very extraordinary," she said; "I may be mistaken; but yet I do not think I am."

"What! what do you mean?" eagerly asked the colonel.

"I could almost persuade myself," replied Clarentine, "that I am in possession of a letter in that very handwriting."

"From whom did you receive it?" anxiously demanded the colonel.

"Pardon me," said Clarentine, "I am more than probably mistaken; and therefore it would be unjust to hazard an opinion."

But the colonel was not to be refused; he represented to her the clue which might thus be produced for discovering, and delivering up to punishment, the persecutor of her innocent friend; and insisted, that to the circle by which she was then surrounded, she could have neither fear nor hesitation in divulging her ideas.

As she prepared to reply, lord Deloraine fixed his eyes upon her with an expression, as it appeared, of mingled anxiety and apprehension; and when, at the reiterated command of her father, Clarentine had pronounced—"I think then, if I must speak, that it very much resembles the handwriting of the letter

which

which Mr. Elphinstone sent to me at Cheltenham last year," marks of the greatest uneasiness were visible both in his features and actions. His emotion, however, passed unnoticed, except by his wife, so greatly was the attention of all present engaged, by examining the colonel's letter, and reflecting on the words of Clarentine, who, at the request of her father, left the apartment, to fetch the epistle to which she had alluded.

When Clarentine returned, and the letter in question was produced, every one declared that the resemblance of which she had spoken was too striking to be mistaken; and when it was handed, for his opinion, to lord Augustus, slightly glancing his eye over the paper, as if it gave him pain to look upon the characters which it contained.—"This," he said, "is what I from the first apprehended."

There was a solemnity in his manner which

which surprised his friends, and the inquired if Elphinstone were known to him?

"I am amongst those," he returned, "with whom secrecy would be equally dishonourable as unnecessary, upon any affair which bears a relation to myself. Peregrine Elphinstone is my natural brother; I am sorry to be compelled to state that he is a most profligate young man, addicted to luxuries, and fashionable vices of every description; again and again have I supplied his wants from my own purse, but his demands exceed the bounds of reason."

"I know the man," returned the colonel, "and have heard something of his story before; pray, was not his mother the sister of our late rector, Miss Elizabeth Murray?"

Lord Augustus was prevented from replying, by a stifled groan which burst from the lips of Mr. Louvaine, and at the

the same instant he fell back, fainting in his chair.

The endeavours of all present were immediately directed to his restoration. In the course of a few minutes the desired effect was produced; and on again opening his eyes, he fixed them eagerly and affectionately upon his daughter, and drawing her towards him, he clasped her to his breast.—" Oh, my child!" he exclaimed, " great is the wretchedness which the benevolence of Providence has in its mercy spared thee! If Elphinstone has indeed been thy persecutor, that persecutor was thy brother! All concealment vanishes before these friends; Elizabeth Murray, his parent, was my wife and thy mother!"

Georgina sunk upon her knees before her father—her head fell upon his hands, and she burst into a flood of grateful tears.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.



THE origin and dissipated character of Mr. Elphinstone we have already described; it now remains only for us to give a detail of the motives by which he was actuated in his conduct towards Georgina, and the arts by which he proceeded to the execution of his plans.

At a very early age, as has already been related, he was taken from the protection of his mother, and placed under the care of a person who had formerly been a confidential servant of his father, lord Augustus Deloraine; but from the hour of his birth, his uncle, the reverend Mr. Murray, although he had resolved in future not to countenance his sister, had equally determined not to lose sight of her offspring, as he considered

dered it by no means improbable, that a man, who had shewn the cruel neglect which lord Augustus Deloraine had done to the mother of his child, might, in the progress of time, desert the son, in like manner as he had abandoned the parent: accordingly, at the death of Peregrine's father, which occurred when he was about seven years old, Mr. Murray immediately took him under his care—placed him at a seminary of the first eminence, from whence, at a proper age, he removed him to the university, which was followed by his taking orders; and at the death of his uncle, he found himself in possession of church-livings to the amount of nearly nine hundred a-year, of which the village in which Thunderbolt Hall was situated formed a parish.

The heart of Elphinstone had always been inclined to libertinism; but during the lifetime of Mr. Murray, he had felt himself obliged to disguise his inclinations, and confine himself to minor vices,

and

and less extravagant pleasures, than those to which his buoyant spirits would, unrestrained, have aspired. With the death of this relation arrived the period for throwing off the mask; and he immediately entered upon a regular system of gaming, drinking, running his horses on the turf, and sporting his mistresses on the *pavé*. This routine of pleasure, by means of screwing down the stipends of his curates, rigorously exacting the tithes of his parishioners, and various other resources of an equally-mean nature, he contrived to support for about three years, without any material loss or inconvenience. One evening about this time, entering a noted gaming-house, in a state of intoxication, which, if not utterly depriving him of reason, had at least rendered him very unfit to contend with professional players, he in the morning found himself the debtor for a sum which it appeared almost impossible for him immediately to raise, and for the

payment of which his creditor did not seem by any means willing to grant him time.

The person to whom this debt of honour was due was a man of about fifteen years his superior in age, of the name of Gayton, whom he had observed to be a constant attendant at the table where his ill fortune had, on the preceding evening, taken place—a man who played with extreme caution—appeared determined upon winning—and possessed of sufficient coolness to withdraw himself when a stake had fallen in his favour. Requesting to speak with him in a private apartment, Mr. Gayton thus addressed him—" It is not, sir," he said, " relative to the debt of honour which exists between us that I have called you aside; I confess that it would be agreeable to me to receive it as soon as possible—but of that hereafter. I wish to give you some information, which may be of essential service to you

in

in your progress through life. Are you, sir, aware who was your father?"

Elphinstone recounted what he believed to be the fact, that he was the son of a distant relative of Mr. Murray, the gentleman who had brought him up.

"You are, sir," returned Mr. Gayton, "the son of Mr. Murray's sister, but your father was lord Augustus Deloraine; I had the pleasure of enjoying his intimate acquaintance till the hour of his death, and know every circumstance of his past life."

"But how can this knowledge be productive of benefit to me?" inquired Elphinstone.

"The only offspring born to your father in wedlock," answered Mr. Gayton, "was a son, the present lord Deloraine; he is extremely rich—reputed to be of a most amiable and generous disposition; and no doubt that if you were to make yourself known to him, by letter, any moderate service which you might urge

 at

at his hands would be granted you without hesitation."

Elphinstone resolved to hazard the experiment, and a few posts brought him a sum sufficient to defray his debt of honour to Mr. Gayton, and to leave him a couple of clear hundreds in his pocket. Delighted with the knowledge which he had obtained of his affinity to so great and so generous a nobleman, his gratitude for the discovery knew no bounds to Gayton, and from that moment they became sworn friends; Gayton, however, not failing to admonish him to use the influence which he appeared to possess over the feelings of lord Deloraine with moderation, lest his own improvidence might prove a check to his future accommodation from the same quarter.

Shortly after this occurrence, chancing to visit one of his livings, which was situated on the coast, near Portsmouth, Elphinstone, for the first time, saw

Georgina,

Georgina, and became instantly enamoured of her person. He inquired who she was; and finding her to be an orphan, and the *protégée* of the humble evangelical preacher, Benjamin Ebsworth, he resolved to possess her. Whilst he was meditating the means of making her his, some farther questions, which he advanced concerning her in the neighbourhood, made him acquainted with the advertisements which had appeared in the London prints relative to her situation; and upon the knowledge of these he determined to act, for the accomplishment of his wishes.

He had lately been introduced to the house of a Mrs. Blower, in London; he considered her a female admirably adapted to the execution of his plan, and he resolved immediately to return to town, and make her the offer of a handsome reward for her services to that effect. But considering, on his journey, that the rank and title of a man like lord

Augustus Deloraine must have infinitely more weight with a woman of her description than the simple name of Mr. Elphinstone, he resolved, for a time, to discard his clerical black, and to introduce himself to her as his lordship; and in order to heighten the deception which he was practising, to request that he might be known in her house only as her cousin Harley, being desirous of concealing his real name from her promiscuous visitors.

Very little persuasion won Mrs. Blower to his purposes; and the adroitness with which she contrived to carry off Georgina from her venerable and unsuspecting protector, we have already witnessed; as we have likewise Georgina's providential escape from the house of vice, at the very moment when she had arrived at the brink of ruin, from which the intrepidity of a resolute and sympathizing heart, like that of Mrs. Sandford, could alone have rescued her.

No

No sooner was Georgina known to be gone, than the disappointed Elphinstone heaped upon Mrs. Blower the most coarse and bitter invectives, for her carelessness in having suffered her to escape—refused either to grant her the promised reward for her services, or to reimburse her for the expence which she had been at, for the dress and maintenance of Georgina since her residence in London—and, in the fury of a madman, quitted her house.

Mrs. Blower did not attempt to detain him; she doubted not that when his passion had cooled, he would return to seek her advice upon the best method of tracing the steps of the fugitive. But several days elapsed, and as he did not appear, she began seriously to apprehend that she was in danger of losing the golden harvest to which she had looked forward from his purse; and having discovered that the residence of lord Augustus Deloraine was at a family-seat in

one of the midland counties, thither she posted; and learning, on her arrival, that his lordship was at home, she requested an interview, which was readily granted, and from which she had only the mortification of deriving the conviction, that, acute as she had hitherto believed herself in the arts of life, she had been the dupe of an impostor, whom there appeared little probability of her ever being able to trace out.

Almost maddened by the irritation of her feelings, Mrs. Blower was, however, obliged to return to London, where, although unknown to her to be so, Elphinstone was living in a state of mind by no means more enviable than her own. The disappointment which he had experienced in the loss of Georgina, was aggravated by the knowledge that his means had been so much reduced by the expence at which he had been compelled to sustain his assumed title, that he had no ready resources for future pleasures.

pleasure. In this dilemma he a second time addressed himself to lord Augustus Deloraine, and besought his assistance. A few days brought him a very concise reply, which contained an hundred pound bank-note, and which, mingled with some oblique animadversions on his extravagance, very plainly hinted to him, that he had not any future favour to expect from him.

To a man addicted to the extravagant pleasures of Elphinstone, an hundred pounds was too trivial a sum to communicate even a momentary satisfaction to his feelings; he threw himself upon a sofa, and lay buried in thought, endeavouring to devise some plan for amending his prospects in life. At length it occurred to him, that from the fortune of a rich wife, resources might in the easiest manner be drawn, and he accordingly resolved to marry. To Clarentine Thunderbolt he had already shewn marked attentions; her father was re-

puted to be a wealthy man; and in consideration of the handsome independence which Frederick Trelawney possessed, he imagined it probable that the colonel might be induced to make the dower of his daughter greater than he would have done, unbiassed by that circumstance.

We have seen the ill success which attended his hopes in his matrimonial speculation, and have only to add, that his fear of encountering any of the relatives of the unhappy female, who had a very short time before fallen the victim of his seductive arts in that neighbourhood, was the occasion of the shortness of the visit which he paid to the colonel, on the morning on which he called at Thunderbolt Hall, to request his permission for addressing his daughter.

Nearly three months were now passed by him in unpropitious visits to watering-places, and when in London, in screening himself from those whom he wished to keep in ignorance of his real

name,

name, and place of abode, when an accident conveyed to him intelligence of the parents of Georgina having been discovered, and her having been declared the heiress of the wealthy lady Sydenham. From the moment of his gaining this information, his mind was harassed with ten thousand plans for inducing Georgina to become his wife. He placed great reliance on Gayton's skill in intrigue, and resolved to admit him to his confidence; accordingly having, without reserve, communicated to him what had already occurred with regard to Georgina, he besought him to advise him in what shape he conceived any project could be drawn, with a prospect of accomplishing the object of his heart.

The communications of the evil-disposed cannot afford pleasure, in their contemplation, to the heart of worth; we shall therefore confine ourselves to the outline of the conversation which, on this occasion, passed between the two

iniquitous friends. Gayton immediately represented to him, how unlikely it was that Georgina should ever be induced to give her hand to a man, to whom she owed so flagrant a wrong as that which she had already suffered from him; and that, consequently, if he were bent upon the attempt of making her his, by stratagem could he alone hope to achieve his purpose.

Elphinstone, in return, only entreated him to devise some means which might promise success to his wishes, and assured him, that if they were brought to a favourable issue, his reward should be unbounded. Accordingly, after much deliberation, the measures which we have already seen put into execution were adopted; an elegant house on Ham Common was engaged; a large establishment of servants collected; and Mr. Gayton took upon himself to personate the physician, who had for some time past had the care of lady Deloraine's health.

health, under the assumed name of sir Leontine Watmore.

Still money was necessary for the carrying on of this expensive plan—an article in which Mr. Elphinstone was, at that time, very deficient, and his friend very unable to supply him with. At length, after a pause of reflection—"I set my future fate and fortune on this cast," exclaimed Elphinstone, "and I will at any price hazard the chance! I will write once more to lord Augustus Deloraine, and if he refuses me his assistance, I will without hesitation mortgage my livings." To his lordship he accordingly, without delay, dispatched a letter, entreating from him the loan of a thousand pounds, which, he said, would be the means, if he were so happy as to procure it, of placing him in a situation of the greatest affluence for the remainder of his life; and solemnly promising never to make a similar request

of

of him again. The letter was dispatched, and at the expiration of a couple of days returned, with information from his lordship's steward, that his master had sailed with the fleet bound to the Mediterranean.

"There is now then no resource left me but the mortgage," said Elphinstone, addressing his friend.

"Reflect one moment, ere you proceed to the last extremity," said Gayton: "do you really consider it probable that when you have Georgina in your power, she will consent to become your wife?"

"I have not the slightest hesitation in believing that her fears will compel her to the act," answered Elphinstone.

"Well then," returned Mr. Gayton, "I will undertake to raise the money, and a few days will accomplish it; but have you considered that you must employ some agent in your plan, to whom

Georgina's person is known, and who will undertake to decoy her from her protectors?"

Elphinstone proceeded to reflect on the subject. Idle characters, in every station of life, are said quickly to discover each other. Elphinstone knew little of Neddy Stubbins, but on his occasional visits to the village in which Thunderbolt Hall was situated, he had heard him spoken of as a dissipated and wild young man; he resolved to see him, and sound his principles; he found him suited to his designs; their plan was laid, and the unfortunate Georgina became the victim of their entanglements.

The money raised by the mortgaging of the livings, owing to the deductions made from the sum advanced by the persons employed in the transaction, were very inferior to what Elphinstone had anticipated to find them; and he had conducted his splendid establishment on Ham Common only one fortnight,

night, when he began to discover that the incessant demands upon his purse would soon again reduce him to difficulties. He accordingly formed the plan of addressing a letter to colonel Thunderbolt, which he flattered himself, as it promised the immediate restoration of Georgina, would not fail to produce the sum which he mentioned to be requisite for the undertaking. The three thousand were received; his spirits were now again borne on the buoyant wings of hope, and he was sanguine in his belief, that before the expenditure of that sum, he should have prevailed on Georgina to accede to his suit; when one morning, whilst seated at breakfast, being informed that a gentleman desired to speak to him, and having directed him to be admitted, the apartment was entered by a little man in black, attended by two coarse-looking fellows, the former of whom introduced himself to him as Mr. Linchley, the attorney

torney of Mrs. Blower, at whose suit, one of his companions, who were bailiffs, arrested him, by the name of Harley, for the sum of two thousand five hundred pounds.

It was in vain that he attempted to convince them that his name was not Harley—equally so that he endeavoured to bribe them from their purpose; in spite of his threats, remonstrances, and promises, they insisted on conducting him to Kingston Jail. But in places of that nature there are never wanting advisers and agents in the cause of a man who carries the potent article of gold in his pocket; Elphinstone had still nearly two thousand pounds in his possession; a man of the law was quickly called to his assistance, by whom, at the explanation of his friend Gayton, and the liberal administration of the argument just mentioned, his liberation, upon the plea of a misnomer, was in a short time procured; and before a second writ could

be taken out against him, he was on his road to London in a chaise and four.

"What is to be done now?" asked Gayton, as they proceeded along.

"Cross over immediately to France," returned Elphinstone. "I well know the revengeful disposition of Mrs. Blower, and if she fails to overtake me, there is no doubt but she will communicate to the friends of Georgina all that she is acquainted with concerning me: I must take shelter on the Continent, at least till the first violence of the storm is over."

"Which way will you go then?" asked Gayton—"by Brighton or Dover?"

"Neither," replied Elphinstone; "does not the probability of my being pursued to those popular ports strike you? No, I shall make for Rye, and engage the first vessel I can find to carry me over."

"But your means?" returned Gayton.

"I have still sufficient to bear us out for some time," answered Elphinstone;

"at a moment of less anxiety we can deliberate upon our future plans."

Conscious that he was implicated in the iniquity of his friend, Gayton was satisfied to be removed under his wing from the scene of danger; and they arrived in safety at Rye. It was about the hour of five in the morning when they entered the town, and the twilight was just beginning to pierce through the sky; but unfavourable as the hour was for observation, remaining at the inn only till a bottle of brandy had been filled for him, Elphinstone declared his intention of not losing a minute in proceeding to the beach, in quest of a vessel, to transport himself and his companion across the sea. As they advanced towards the beach, the increasing daylight served them to descry several fishing-vessels and boats lying off the shore, but not a living individual was to be perceived. After some time, a

little

little public-house, of which the sign being "*The Boat*," led Elphinstone to conceive that it might be the resort of mariners, attracted his attention; and after many attempts to awaken the inhabitants, a window in the upper story was opened, and a voice inquired his business.

"We want a vessel immediately to transport us to France," answered Elphinstone.

"The weather is so stormy this morning," returned the person in the house, "and the wind likewise blowing full upon the shore, that I do not think any of our fishermen will like to attempt going out."

"I beg of you to let me see them," rejoined Elphinstone; "I will pay them liberally, if they will consent, and you too."

"There are four men in our house who can manage the matter for you, if

any body can," was the reply; "if you please, I will come down and let you in, and then you can hear what they say."

Elphinstone requested that he would do so, and in the course of a few minutes they were admitted into the house.

Some time was expended in rousing the fishermen, during which Elphinstone continued to ply himself and his companion with repeated glasses of brandy, of which he was likewise liberal to the landlord; and on the appearance of the fishermen, for whom he ordered a pint of rum, he made to them his proposals. They assured him, that they considered the experiment to be unsafe; that in the middle of the Channel, with the particular wind then blowing, there was always a heavy tide, which they were apprehensive of encountering; and advised him to defer crossing till the evening, at which time, they said, "the sky prognosticated that the wind would have considerably fallen."

But

But Elphinstone was not to be shaken from his purpose; deaf to their arguments, and still drinking freely of the brandy, and encouraging the fishermen to follow his example, the display of a twenty-pound note, and the promise of a gallon of liquor, when they had reached a French port, at length prevailed upon them to carry their sails on board.

In the course of a quarter of an hour, every thing was prepared for the reception of the voyagers; they entered the vessel, and were in a few seconds launched upon the bosom of the ocean. Nearly two hours elapsed, during which, although the violence of the wind threatened them with no personal danger, it frequently subjected them to the inconvenience of the vessel filling with water; but Elphinstone derided the want of outward comfort, whilst his bottle still contained a portion of the cordial which could administer warmth to his heart, and oblivion to his feelings; and notwithstanding

withstanding the growing danger, and disagreeableness of his situation, as they were approaching the apprehended tide in the Channel, he sunk into a profound sleep. How long he had slept he was uncertain, when he was awakened by a loud cry of distress. On opening his eyes, he perceived that a mountain-billow was rolling over the vessel; as it dispersed, he beheld Gayton and the fishermen washed from their stations, and contending with the foaming waves; and the next instant, the shivered vessel, to a wreck of which he had insensibly clung, sunk with him, never to rise again.

CHAPTER IV.

From the contemplation of such unprincipled beings, as we frequently witness to be overtaken, even upon earth, by the retribution of Heaven, in punishment for the unjust conduct which they have exercised towards their fellows in existence, with how great satisfaction do we turn to a view of such excellent characters as have made their virtues the surest safety for their eventual felicity!

In compliance with the earnest entreaty of Clarentine, Georgina and her father had consented to remain a few days at Thunderbolt Hall; and one afternoon, when the ladies had strolled into the shrubbery, and lord Deloraine

and Mr. Louvaine were engaged in listening to some of the colonel's favourite old stories, over a bottle of his best port, the serjeant suddenly entering the apartment, exclaimed—"Excuse my abruptness, your honours; but I could not forbear being the first to tell you that our noble lieutenant is arrived; if you look out upon the lawn, you may see him waving his hat from the window of the chaise, as it proceeds up the avenue."

The colonel started from his seat, and hastened to the casement—"It is my boy!—it is Fred, by Heaven!" he cried, "and he looks as well as ever—upon my honour he does! and jumps out of the carriage with as much activity as if he had not ailed any thing."

In a few moments lieutenant Trelawney rushed into the apartment. His first salutation was to his father; it was affectionate, and from the heart. He

 next

next turned to lord Augustus—"Brother sailor," he said, extending towards him his hand, "can you forgive me?—you know what I am when I have got a glass in my head—devilishly provoking, I am sensible, but without any evil intention in my heart; and believe me, that having given you, my worthy captain, provocation to be offended with me, has created me double the anxiety of my wound."

Lord Augustus was considerably affected by his address—"It is I," he said, "who ought to inquire whether you can pardon me? for I should have considered the nature of your temper before I proceeded to revenge its ebullitions."

"As," said the colonel, "you appear both so fully convinced that the fault was your own, upon such terms of concession there can be no difficulty in effecting a perfect reconciliation. You

are

are now not only brother seamen, but brothers in affinity; engrave that remembrance on your hearts, and erase from them all recollections of the past."

They ardently grasped each other's hands; on withdrawing his, Frederick said—"You cannot think how it tickles my humour, captain, that you should be my sister's husband after all; I told her, when last we parted, that I was certain she would be caught before I came back; but I never dreamt that my most esteemed friend would turn out to be the man."

The colonel now led his son to an introduction with Mr. Louvaine, and when the compliments at meeting were past, drawing him a few paces aside, whispered in his ear, but still sufficiently loud for his observation to be generally heard—"That gentleman is the father of the young lady who has so often been the subject of my letters to you;

 and

and by whose charms, if your heart is not put into a blaze the moment you behold her, I shall think you the most insensible dog I ever met with in my life!"

Frederick now took his seat at the table, and the colonel ringing the bell, directed that the ladies should be informed of his arrival, and requested to join them in the dining-room. In a few minutes they appeared; Clarentine flew into the arms of her brother, who, at the same instant that he clasped her to his heart, extended one of his hands to Miss Hewardine, who received it with a rapture which displayed the unfeigned joy which she experienced at once more beholding him.

When their first greetings were past —"Now, my boy," said the colonel, "I have only one more introduction to make to you, and then I believe all our ceremonies are over; this," leading him

up

up to her as he spoke, " is Miss Georgina Louvaine, who——"

Georgina raised her eyes to the lieutenant; they no sooner rested on his countenance, than she started, trembled, and leant for support upon the back of a chair near to which she was standing. The lieutenant appeared for a few seconds fixed to the spot on which he stood; then rushing towards her, he seized her hands in his, and exclaimed—" You are—yes, I am sure you are, the very identical being who——I cannot name you; but I am convinced, by the expression of your features, that you are that angelic——I am certain you understand me. Don't you remember the over-driven ox?—don't you recollect my examining your finger, to discover whether you wore a wedding-ring?"

Georgina blushed crimson-deep, and endeavoured to shrink from observation.

" And do you know each other, and have

have you seen one another before?" ejaculated the colonel; "I never was so happy in my life. I suppose a few minutes more will convince me that the apology of you both for not marrying, was your affection for each other. Zounds! was there ever such a curious occurrence? Tell me directly how you became acquainted, I command you, for I can't rest till I have gained the information!"

In spite of the remonstrances and reiterated blushes of Georgina, with the openness natural to his profession and his heart, Frederick gave the required explanation; and the colonel sung, whistled, and danced, upon the conviction that there no longer existed any obstacle to the union on which his heart had so long been placed.

What more remains to be said? It has always been our opinion, that when the characters of a tale, like those of a

stage

stage performance, have reached the climax of their fortunes, they cannot too soon make their parting bows and curtseys; in accordance with which rule, a few additional sentences will now conclude our history.

In the course of a due period, the inseparability of Frederick and his Georgina was solemnized; and on the same day, in compliance with the earnest entreaties of Mr. Louvaine, and the persuasions of colonel Thunderbolt, Miss Hewardine was prevailed upon to give her hand to her first and only love; and at the express wish of the colonel, who could not tolerate the idea of being deprived of the society of his sister-in-law, to which he had so long been accustomed, it was agreed that Mr. and Mrs. Louvaine should divide their time between his habitation and that of their son Frederick, who had purchased, for the residence of his bride, a splendid

mansion in the neighbourhood of his father's abode.

That the union of Georgina and her father both proved happy in their consequences, can hardly be required to be stated, when we reflect upon the purity of the esteem and affection from which they both sprung. Equal enjoyers of felicity in the married state were lord Augustus Deloraine and his Clarentine; in the society of each other was their greatest happiness centered; and the visits which they were constantly in the habit of paying to Thunderbolt Hall, gained additional zest from lady Sydenham being regularly a member of their happy circle.

The death of his natural brother was not heard by lord Augustus without his experiencing considerable emotion at his wretched fate. Mrs. Blower, satisfied with the revenge which she had taken on the false lord Augustus, by restoring

Georgina to her friends, retired with her ill-gotten savings to a distant country, where, like other ephemeral characters similar to her own, she sunk into oblivion, and was heard of no more; whilst Neddy Stubbins, condemned, for his adjunction in the stealth of Georgina, to a year's close imprisonment, was released at the termination of his sentence, with a severe admonition to profit by the experience which he had so dearly bought.

Rebecca Searle lived to a considerable age, and at the hour of her dissolution, satisfied that her humble life had been passed in deeds of active benevolence and Christian charity, upon which it afforded her both comfort and satisfaction to reflect, she met the common enemy of man as her friend, and died invoking blessings on those whom she had esteemed in life.

Mr. and Mrs. Sandford lived happy

 and

and respected, surrounded by a numerous offspring, who repaired to them the loss of their esteemed uncle, whose earthly existence was but of a very few years duration, after their acquaintance with him had commenced.

The colonel considered himself a happier being than any one of his relations, friends, or acquaintance; and when the same year made him twice a grandfather, his delight knew no bounds. Still, to the day of his death, his friendship continued firm for his faithful adherent, Jedediah Trimbush. With very few exceptions, their evening conversations, smokings, and recapitulations of the events which they had together witnessed on the theatre of war, were continued to the latest period of their existence; and when death at length put a close to the life of his commander, the only request urged by the serjeant to his heirs was, that a spot of ground

might

might be assigned him, at the feet of his revered master, in order that they might rise together at the sound of the general trumpet.

THE BENEFIT NIGHT;

OR,

ACTORS AND AMATEURS.

A comic Tale.

THE

BENEFIT NIGHT.

ONE fine morning, in the month of August, no matter in what year, of the number of passengers who stepped out of the Margate hoy, were a young gentleman, named Frederick Rivers, and his servant Sinister. The former was about twenty years age, of a handsome and engaging person, and the nephew of an old general, residing at an ancient family-mansion in the county of Stafford, which was distinguished by the same name as its possessor, and called Tornado Hall.

Frederick

Frederick was an orphan; he was the son of the general's only sister, and had experienced, in his uncle's conduct towards him, the most indulgent reparation of his parents' loss; but the general was a man of violent passions, as well as of an excellent heart; he was one who adored those that blindly complied with his inclinations, and could not easily forgive a dissension from his will. He wished to see every body happy, particularly his friends and his relatives—more especially than all, his darling nephew; but those who were to be made happy by his hand must be content with that kind of happiness which it was his choice to confer on them, or lose his favour; and an alternative of this nature had lately driven Frederick to fly from his home.

Sinister, who was about ten years Frederick's senior in age, was the son of an honest shopkeeper, who had left him a few thousands at his death, with which

he had immediately turned dasher, and by various extravagances, in addition to ill-fortune at play, had, in a few months, reduced himself to a state of necessity. Of naturally-quick abilities, indigence had sharpened his perceptions, and rendered him expert in every art of life; and the smiles of fate having introduced him to the knowledge of Frederick Rivers during his residence at the university of Oxford, he was so well pleased with him, as to wish to have him about his person, and the general's consent had, without difficulty, been obtained to his retaining him in his service.

Having described their characters, we will leave their conversation at landing, to explain the motive of their visit to the coast of Kent.

"Welcome to Margate, sir," cried the sprightly Sinister, whose spirits no misfortunes had been able to subdue.

"Oh, Sinister," replied Frederick,

who had from his cradle been the victim of indulgence, and who was now sinking under the first difficulties which he had ever encountered in life, "what a horrid night have we passed in that confounded hoy, crammed up with fifty other beings even more extraordinary than ourselves, and breathing an atmosphere of contagion!"

"Well, sir," exclaimed Sinister, "there was a benefit even in that! Don't you enjoy the pure air you are now inhaling ten times more than if you had not been a few hours deprived of it? What signifies how we passed the night, now it is over? Only imagine that you were at a ball, and your fatigue will be just the same as if it arose from dancing. The past is a dream—the future, a shadow."

"Which then," said Frederick, "is the true hour of enjoyment?"

"That," answered Sinister, "is a question which has puzzled much greater philosophers than either you or I, sir."

"I wish I had been philosopher enough not to have taken your advice!" ejaculated Frederick.

"You would have been past philosophizing by this time, if you had not," rejoined Sinister. "Why, sir, is not the Margate hoy itself better than lying dead at the bottom of a fishpond? Though, with humble submission to you be it spoken, that I believe you have been indulged, till you would consider any man in the wrong who would prevent you from running your head into an oven, if you thought it the best way of warming your nose."

"Indulged!" echoed Frederick; "is it any proof of indulgence that I am compelled to fly from my home, because my uncle, the only relative whom I possess, would force me into marriage with a woman whom I never saw?"

"Well, sir," said Sinister, "and as I was informed by you that he had de-

clared

clared himself immoveably fixed to his plan, I recommended you to take a short trip from home, not doubting that your absence from him, during which he is always unhappy, would cause him to relent."

"I have only shewn my folly in attending to you," answered Frederick.

"Pardon me, sir," rejoined Sinister, "you have displayed the height of wisdom, as a very simple demonstration will shew; your running-away plan may at any time be changed into a plunge into the water, upon which you had first resolved; but if you had drowned yourself first, you would have found it very difficult to have run away afterwards."

"There is some reason in what you say, I confess," replied Frederick.

"Well, sir," returned Sinister, "under the guidance of what you are now pleased to allow to be reason, we left the old family-mansion in Staffordshire this day

se'nnight

se'nnight for London—London did not please you, and here we are at Margate, where you quarrel with the first breeze that blows in your face."

They were now approaching the inn, to which a porter was conducting them—"We must be economists," said Frederick; "I have not five pounds left, and to apply to my uncle is impossible."

"Economists!" reiterated Sinister; "as your pocket is thus low, we must order the best breakfast the house will afford."

"Why, Sinister, are you mad to talk thus, knowing what my circumstances are?" rejoined Frederick.

"Mad, sir!" echoed Sinister, "why, if we are poor, what have we to trust to, but fashion, for keeping our necks above water? You have mixed very little upon the busy stage of life, and consequently are not a match for the ways of the world; so once more, dear sir, I entreat you be content

content to put yourself under my guidance. If we were to go sneaking into that inn, and order an economical breakfast, we should pay dear, get nothing fit to eat, and be left without a sixpence in our pockets; when, on the contrary, if we bluster, strut, order of the best, and find fault with every thing, we may run up what bill we please, and be accounted people of consequence into the bargain."

"Indeed!" pronounced the half-incredulous Frederick.

"To be sure, sir!" exclaimed Sinister. "How do you suppose half the men of fashion could contrive to live as they do else? You know, sir, I have not all my life been a servant; I have had an opportunity of seeing all ranks, and learning the manœuvres of every situation in life. But come, sir, here is the door of the house; in boldly—call about you nobly, as I directed you; and whilst we are taking our breakfast, we will ruminate on

some

some resource against that worst of all sins—poverty."

Whilst our travellers are at breakfast, we have a short piece of information to give our reader. The wife designed for Frederick by his uncle, general Tornado, was a Miss Blandford; her father was a baronet, who possessed an estate equal to the general's, in the neighbouring county of Shropshire. Sir James and the general had been intimate friends through life; the union of their families had ever been an inclination upon which their minds had been fixed; and at the very hour of Eliza Blandford's birth, an indissoluble engagement had been entered into between them, that on the day on which Frederick Rivers attained his twenty-first year, he should become her husband; and in order that no prejudice against each other might be entertained by the parties thus contracted, it was farther agreed between their

whimsical ancestors, that they should not see each other till they met at the altar.

Eliza and Frederick had accordingly remained unknown to each other; but the period being arrived at which Frederick wanted only a few weeks of becoming of age, they had been commanded to prepare for acquaintance. Eliza had professed herself equally averse to the idea of giving her hand to a man whom she had never seen, as Frederick had declared himself reluctant to become the husband of a woman, in whose society he had never passed a single hour. Sir James and the general, however, continued inflexibly bent upon the accomplishment of their long-devised project; and Frederick, unable to win over his uncle to an accordance with his wishes in this instance, as he had never before failed to do in every other, resolved, as we have already learnt from the lips of

Sinister

Sinister, to fly for a while from home, in the hope that his sudden and unexpected departure might fill the old gentleman with apprehensions relative to the consequences of his flight, and, in his alarm, cause him to relent.

In this state were affairs when Frederick Rivers, and his political adherent Sinister, entered the inn at Margate.

Whilst at breakfast, as the door of their apartment occasionally opened, Sinister caught accidental glances of a very pretty face in the bar, which his meal was no sooner concluded, than he went to take a nearer view of. This attractive female, whose name was Rebecca, was the daughter of the landlady of the house, Mrs. Clatter; and as Sinister sauntered towards the bar, he perceived the two personages just mentioned in whispering conversation within it; but although he did not overhear their words, our reader

may become acquainted with them, if he pleases.

"Why, daughter," grumbled Mrs. Clatter, "how could you be so foolish last night as to tell that officer we had no burgundy in the house? You will ruin my trade if you make these mistakes. Do you think I have been a landlady these five-and-twenty years, and don't know how to brew burgundy?"

"Why, mother," returned Rebecca, "the gentlemen often ask such difficult questions, I don't know what to say to them."

"Well, when they ask you any more difficult questions, I desire you will send them to me for an answer," rejoined Mrs. Clatter, and bustled away into the kitchen.

When she was gone, Rebecca, seating herself by the window, began to sing; her voice was sweetly melodious. Sinister approached her—"You are the

bar-

bar-maid, ain't you, my dear?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Rebecca, "I am the bar-maid; can I serve you with any thing, sir?"

"Any thing you please, my dear," returned Sinister.

Rebecca smiled, and went on with her song.

"It is a shame you should be a maid with that voice," said Sinister.

"Indeed, sir, I don't think it a shame to be a maid with any voice," answered the arch Rebecca.

"Perhaps it is what you prefer?" rejoined Sinister.

"Perhaps I have not a choice of my own," returned Rebecca.

"To whose will are you obliged to submit?" inquired Sinister.

"To my father's," answered Rebecca.

"And who is your father?" asked Sinister.

 "Mother,"

"Mother," cried Rebecca, "here is a gentleman asking a very difficult question; you must come and give him an answer."

Sinister was even more pleased with her archness than he had been with her handsome person, and was on the point of replying, when Mrs. Clatter made her appearance. At the sight of her mother, Rebecca ran laughing away; Mrs. Clatter, however, it seemed, had not heard the words which her daughter had uttered. Advancing towards Sinister, with a curtsey, she put a play-bill into his hand, and when he had cast his eyes over it, thus addressed him — "Will you and your friend, sir, do me the favour to take a couple of tickets for the play this evening? I shall be infinitely obliged to you. I am in a dreadful dilemma, sir. I am one of the renters of the theatre in this place; all I get by my share is a clear benefit, which is fixed for

to-night.

to-night. The play, as you see, sir, by the bill, is '*The Soldier's Daughter*." A friend of mine in London engaged Mr. Bannister to come down, and play Frank Heartall for me; it is now one o'clock; the rehearsal has been waiting these two hours, and there are no tidings of him yet."

"Melancholy indeed!" replied Sinister.

"Oh, very, very, sir!" returned Mrs. Clatter; "there will not be a dozen people in the house, except absolute friends; I was to have paid his expences down, and given him ten guineas."

Sinister fixed his eyes for a few moments in silence on Mrs. Clatter, then said—"And you really think Mr. Bannister will not come?"

"Indeed I fear so, sir," returned the landlady; "for the manager here tells me he has no doubt that he is detained to play in London to-night."

 "And

"And what were you to have given him?" asked Sinister.

"Ten guineas at the fall of the curtain, sir," replied Mrs. Clatter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" ejaculated Sinister; "and you don't know me now you see me?"

"Sir! what, are you he?" exclaimed the landlady.

"Yes, you are right," rejoined Sinister; "I am he—Jack Bannister, or Frank Heartall, at your service."

"Oh, I am out of my wits with joy!" cried Mrs. Clatter; "I will tell the waiter to run to the theatre, and——"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Sinister, interrupting her, "you must do no such thing; nobody must run, nor have the least information of my being here; I have purposely kept myself snug, because I have a dislike to the trouble of country rehearsals; and nothing but the anxiety which I saw you suffering should

have tempted me to discover myself, till half-an-hour before the drawing-up of the curtain."

"Well, sir, exactly as you please," replied the delighted Mrs. Clatter; "then nothing shall be said but that I have received information from town, that you will certainly be here against the hour of performance."

"Enough; that is just as I could wish," replied Sinister.

"But, sir," rejoined the landlady, "my friend in town who engaged you, wrote me word that you had promised to bring down with you Mr. Russell, to play Captain Woodley."

"And were you to have paid his expences too, and given him ten guineas at the fall of the curtain?" inquired Sinister.

"Oh, yes, sir—yes, to be sure!" replied Mrs. Clatter; "did not my friend tell you so?"

"And do you think, ma'am, that my friend is not here?" ejaculated Sinister. "Why, who do you suppose it was that came in with me, and is now at breakfast in the parlour? Why, Mr. Russell, to be sure!"

"Well, this is a weight off my mind!" cried the landlady.

"I am glad you are happy," replied Sinister; "but observe, my dear ma'am, not a word about him till night, any more than about me; his objections are the same as my own."

The landlady promised to obey his injunctions, and Sinister left her to acquaint Frederick with what had passed. On returning to the parlour, where he had left him, he found him gone, and inquiring for him of the waiter, learned that he had strolled out into the street. After a ten minutes' walk, Sinister overtook the object of his pursuit—"Oh, my dear fellow!" cried the latter, "do you know

know that I believe I could find in my heart to turn actor?"

"You are turned actor, my dear sir," replied Sinister, "whether you can find in your heart to do so or not; the fates have decreed that you must put on the buskin."

"Why, what do you mean?" cried Frederick.

"Read that bill—only read that bill," returned Sinister, putting into the hand of his master the play-bill which had been given to him by Mrs. Clatter.

Frederick fixed his eyes upon the paper, and read aloud the two first lines.—"Theatre, Margate; Mr. Bannister and Mr. Russell, from Drury-lane——"

"That is enough," cried Sinister, interrupting him. "The bill can tell you no more; I must be your informer now. Mr. Bannister and Mr. Russell are not here, according to their appointment; *we* are here, with spirits of ready invention;

tion; one man's loss is another man's gain. I have passed you and myself off to our landlady, who takes her benefit to-night as a renter of the theatre, for the comedians. The scheme puts ten guineas a-piece into our empty pockets; and as much of the larder and cellar as we find it agreeable to receive into our stomachs."

"Oh, impossible!" returned Frederick; "I never can go through the business!"

"Lord bless my soul, sir," cried Sinister, "impossible indeed! why have not you acted fifty times at Mr. Rant's private theatre, without the slightest hesitation?"

"Ay, but the difference between private and public acting——" said Frederick.

"Is all in your favour, sir," replied Sinister; "a public audience will treat your efforts with candour; whilst a circle

cle of select friends, envious of your possessing the power of affording them entertainment, damn you with faint praise."

"But I have never studied the part of Captain Woodley," returned Frederick.

"Well, sir," rejoined Sinister, "but there is time enough for you to do so, between now and seven in the evening. We will get a couple of books directly—learn by rote all we are able—prompt one another in every scene, and, like many other great actors, say what we please for what we cannot remember."

"It cannot be," answered Frederick.

"But it must be," emphatically pronounced Sinister; "we must either keep ourselves from starving by the means in our power, or return to your uncle, and dance at your wedding with the bride he has chosen for you."

"Rather than that, I would at this moment submit to any alternative," replied Frederick. "You must recollect I told you just now that I could almost find in my heart to turn actor, and now I will tell you why. I am, within this hour, fallen in love—most desperately and decidedly in love! I have seen the most bewitching being in nature, and she proves to be an actress. Just after you had quitted the room at the inn, whilst I was finishing my breakfast, I overheard a most delightful female voice, rehearsing a part of a play, in an apartment adjoining to ours. I applied my eye to the keyhole of a door of communication between the rooms, and beheld——"

"All those charms," cried Sinister, interrupting him, "which every man beholds in the woman that pleases his fancy."

"Even so," replied Frederick. "In

a few

a few moments after my first observing her, she rose, and left the house. Unable to quit her presence whilst it was in my power to enjoy the delight of beholding her, I followed her along the street, and presently saw her enter a building, which I was informed was the theatre. Of a servant of the house I inquired her name, and learnt that it was Sommers, and that she was this evening to play the Widow Cheerly, and make her first appearance upon this stage."

"And for her sake," rejoined Sinister, "you believed that you could have made up your mind to turn public actor? Well, your own sake is now thrown likewise into the scale; so let us go and purchase the books, and set heartily about the business."

Frederick at length pronounced a reluctant consent; the books were bought, and they returned to their inn to study. After nearly a couple of hours passed in

silence

silence—"I think I can make myself master of the words of my part," said Frederick, "but I should have liked a rehearsal."

"That you cannot have," replied Sinister, "after what I have said to the landlady. But suppose you were to introduce yourself to the handsome actress in the next room, and go through some of your scenes with her."

"I should like it extremely," answered Frederick.

"I thought so," returned Sinister, with a smile. "Well, about it then directly."

"But tell me," rejoined Frederick—"you are more accustomed to the world than I am—how shall I introduce myself into her apartment?"

"Rap at the door," returned Sinister, "and when she opens it, walk in."

"But if she should be married?" said Frederick.

"Well,"

"Well," cried Sinister, "her husband must be a bashaw indeed, if he attempts to cut your throat because you want to rehearse with his wife."

"I feel very awkward," said Frederick; "I shall never be able to speak first."

"You cannot pay her a greater compliment, sir, than to leave the first word to her," answered Sinister. "There cannot be a more flattering confession to any woman's vanity, than that of a man being struck dumb at the sight of her charms, and one with which an actress will never quarrel, depend upon it."

Frederick was persuaded to follow the advice of his admonitor, and Sinister still continued with his book in his hand. He had not been long alone, when Rebecca entered the apartment, with a salver, upon which were a couple of bottles, some glasses, and some biscuits.

"My mother, sir," she said, "is quite vexed

vexed that you and the other gentleman have had no refreshment since breakfast, and has sent you some by me."

Sinister threw down his book, and catching her by the hand, exclaimed—"Your mother could not have sent me any thing, my dear, that I should have been so happy to receive as yourself."

With a suppressed smile, Rebecca answered—"Shall I have the pleasure of pouring you out a glass of sherry and bitters, sir?"

"Of what, my dear?" asked Sinister.

Rebecca repeated what the bottles contained.

"Oh, no, no!" ejaculated Sinister; "reserve them for some married man—they are accustomed to mix the bitters with the sweets of life."

"And what are poor wives, sir?" returned Rebecca.

"Women, my dear," replied Sinister, "and

"and consequently angels—I live but for the service of the sex."

"What, the old as well as the young, sir?" inquired Rebecca.

"Why, as to that," rejoined Sinister, "I adore them for being females, and wish them at the devil for not being young;" and as he spoke, he attempted to snatch a kiss from the pouting lips of the little bar-maid.

"Hold, sir, hold!" exclaimed Rebecca, frustrating his attempt—"I will take warning by what you have said; I hope to be old one of these days myself, and I could not relish a kiss from the lips of an Adonis, if I thought he would live ever to wish me at the devil afterwards!" Her mother's voice at the same instant calling—"Rebecca, Rebecca!" she ran out of the room, without vouchsafing Sinister another look.

Sinister thought her wit and beauty equally matched, and believed that if

she had but a few hundreds in her pocket, or were but certain of one day being heir to the house which her father now possessed, that he should have no objection to become her husband, distant as the idea of marriage had hitherto been from his mind; for the present, however, he resolved to apply himself to the study of his part, and to think more of Rebecca when the play was over.

Leaving our hero and his companion thus employed, we change our scene to the inn-yard, into which the rattle of a chaise-and-four, about the hour of three in the afternoon, drew the alert Mrs. Clatter.

The door of the carriage being oper ed, and the steps let down, the first pe son who alighted from it was a hale, ruddy-faced man, who appeared about sixty years of age. He was extremely corpulent; the quick movements of his eye indicated its connexion with a fer-

vent

vent soul; his grey hairs were twisted into a curl over each of his ears, and confined in a narrow queue behind. His dress was plain; on his head he wore a cocked hat, in which appeared a black cockade; and in his hand he carried a gold-headed cane.

No sooner had his feet touched the pavement, than—"Welcome to Margate, sir! Happy to see you upon the road, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Clatter.

"Oh, rot your compliments!" cried the old gentleman; "here am I, almost jolting my limbs out of their sockets, by hurrying over the country in hack-chaises, 'and glad to see you upon the road, sir,' is popped into my face at every house I stop at, as much as to say they rejoice in my distress."

A neatly-dressed man, who had been the second to alight from the chaise, addressed his companion by saying—"Recollect that the people are unacquainted

with

with your distress—you are so passionate." The countenance of the speaker was expressive of the greatest mildness, and his manners marked by humility.

"I am passionate, damned passionate!" returned the other; "but you know that I am very good-tempered for all that."

They were shewn into a room, and the old gentleman, declaring that "he was knocked up—jaded to death," ordered a bottle of port and a cold fowl for dinner.

Our readers probably suppose that the stranger just introduced was Frederick's uncle, general Tornado, and it is not our intention to keep them in doubt, but peremptorily to acquaint them that he it was. He had traced his fugitive nephew from Staffordshire to London—he had there gained intelligence of his having embarked on board the Margate hoy, and had lost no time in reaching the

the spot where he had hoped to overtake him. His companion was an humble friend, named Jackall, who had for many years past been an inhabitant of his mansion, and unattended by whom he never stirred from home. The general, as he has himself allowed, was of an extremely-passionate disposition; but, as he has also himself affirmed, he was very good-tempered, that is, he had a kind and benevolent heart at bottom; the present period, however, was not a fair one to judge of his nature by, as the disobedience of his nephew had raised his bile to its bitterest degree.

"The weather is hot enough to scorch a man's vitals that is compelled to travel in the daytime," exclaimed the general, throwing himself into an armchair.

"It is," replied Jackall.

"Except for the breath of air," continued the general, "which we obtained

ed by letting down all the glasses of the chaise, we must have been suffocated."

"We must," answered Jackall.

"And there is dust enough to choak a dromedary," returned the general.

"There is," replied Jackall.

"Zounds!" cried the general, "a man might as well attempt to enter into conversation with an echo as with you; the ever-agreeable Mrs. Shandy must have been an entertaining companion compared to you."

"What can I do but assent to what you affirm?" rejoined Jackall; "you can't live under contradiction."

"I can," roared out the general, "or I should be dead now; the undutiful conduct of my nephew must have killed me."

A waiter now entered, who placed the wine and fowl upon the table.

"Hark you, sir," cried the general, addressing

addressing him, "have you much company in your house just now?"

"Yes, sir, more than we have time to attend to," answered the waiter, and left the room.

"There is an impertinent rascal," exclaimed the general, "to dare to tell me he cannot attend properly to his guests, when I, general Tornado, am one of them! Jackall, bring him back—fetch him to me by his ear!"

"Here he comes with the bread," replied Jackall.

The waiter entered; the general rose from his seat, and placing himself between him and the door of the apartment, shaking his cane in his face, he thus addressed him:—"Do you know, sir, that I am a damned passionate fellow, and that if I was not at the same time very good-tempered, I should knock you down for your inattention? Listen to me, and I will give you a hint for

your conduct in future. If a guest at an inn rings, the waiter that don't obey the sound ought to be horsewhipped; if he calls, and the waiter don't obey, he ought to have his bones broken; and if he rings or calls more than once, the waiter must expect to be killed on the spot!"

"Then, sir, for mercy's sake," cried the waiter, "let me go! for there is a gentleman above, who has rung, and called too a dozen times; and if he has not twice your good-temper, I must expect to die under his hands."

"Stir if you dare!" exclaimed the general. "Let the worst befall you, I promise to pay for your shroud and coffin, and let that make you easy. Answer me—have you a smart, handsome, elegant young fellow, come down by the hoy to-day?"

"Yes, sir, I think we have, sir," answered the waiter.

"How

" How is he dressed ?" asked the general.

" Why, sir, in leather breeches and a blue coat," replied the waiter.

" Well, go on," said the general; " give me every particular."

" White shirt and black boots, sir," returned the waiter.

" Zounds, sirrah! do you mean to banter me?" cried the general, again raising his cane.

" Why, no, sir; did not you bid me give you every particular?" rejoined the waiter.

" The blue coat and leather breeches answer to Sinister's dress," said Jackall.

" They do—they do," replied the general; " it must be he!" then turning again to the waiter, he added—" He was not alone—was he?"

" No, sir," answered the waiter; " there was another young man with him."

 " Any

" Any thing remarkable about him?" asked the general.

" No, sir, nothing at all—just like other folks," returned the waiter.

" Just like other folks!" echoed the general, " what, my glory—my pride—my nephew, just like other folks!"

The waiter now perceived the part it became him to act to gain the old gentleman's favour, and said—" I thought you meant his dress, sir—I did not understand you alluded to his person."

" Well, what of his person?" hastily inquired the general.

" A very engaging countenance, and very much like yours," was the answer.

" What! *is* the dog like me?" cried the general, his features relaxing into a smile.

" Oh, yes, sir," replied the waiter—" as like you as one dog can stare to another."

" Oh,

"Oh, for shame!" exclaimed Jackall, "how dare you be so familiar? Young man, leave the room."

"He shall not leave the room," pronounced the general, "till I have given him a guinea. I should not have cared if he had called me a hyæna, if he had still said Frederick was like me; but I advise him not to be quite so free-spoken with any body else, because it is not every one who is so good-tempered in his passion as I am."

The general drew forth his purse, and having put into his hand the promised one pound-one, dismissed him from the apartment; directing him to inquire whether the young men, of whom he had spoken, were still in the house, and to bring him intelligence on the subject.

We must now say a few words of the fair actress who had captivated the heart of Frederick Rivers. In form she was

tall and elegant—in countenance handsome and engaging; added to which, there beamed the brilliancy of spirit and intelligence in her sparkling eye. She received him with the manners of a gentlewoman, and he perceived that there was no ring on the fourth finger of the left hand, with which she opened to him the door of her apartment, and that consequently he had not the interference of a husband to dread. Frederick stammered out the occasion of his visit, and Miss Sommers replied, that she should be very happy in an opportunity of repeating some of the scenes of her part.—"I shall," she proceeded, "also derive the satisfaction of hearing you pronounce whether you judge me qualified to pass through the ordeal to which I am to-night destined; for I do not scruple to confess to you, that I have never yet trod the boards of a theatre."

"Indeed!" rejoined Frederick; "such

is

is my case—at least I have never yet been the sustainer of any part on a public stage."

"From the first moment I saw you," returned Miss Sommers, "I considered your appearance to be by no means that of a professed performer."

"And I," answered Frederick, "from the first moment of my beholding you, judged you not to have been initiated from your infancy to the labours of a theatrical life."

"You are very right, sir," returned Miss Sommers, "and I doubt not that I shall find the exertions of such a life, to which I have been utterly unaccustomed, very fatiguing." She paused a moment, then added—"But I have been fortunate in obtaining a better situation, and consequently salary, than, as a novice in the business, I could have any right to expect, and I must be satisfied; any alternative is preferable to that

of being compelled to give our hand to a man whom we do not love."

"Except that of marrying a woman whom we hate," sorrowfully pronounced Frederick.

"If I had not run away from my father's house," rejoined Miss Sommers, "I should have been forced by him into marriage with a man whom I never saw."

"Reverse the sexes, and your case is similar to my own," said Frederick.

"I have had the resolution to fly from the injustice of parental tyranny," replied Miss Sommers, "and am what you behold me."

"And I," ejaculated Frederick, "have fled from my perverse destiny to the happiness of knowing you, and of experiencing that my heart is not incapable of the tenderest emotions of passion, when it contemplates a perfect object like yourself."

"This

"This is not rehearsing, sir," exclaimed Miss Sommers; "we will, if you please, attend to the business which introduced us to each other's acquaintance."

"But is it not still more our business, strangely situated as we both are at this moment, to render ourselves, if possible, happy, independently of our connexions, and to defeat the accomplishment of those projects which their infatuated senses have devised for our thraldom?" said Frederick.

Miss Sommers did not appear displeased with his philosophy, but a blush of confusion stole over her cheeks, and she began to repeat some of the lines of her character, in the hope, as it appeared, of concealing her embarrassment. At this tender juncture, a rap upon the door of the apartment called Frederick, who could not suffer the idol of his heart to rise from her seat in his presence,

to open it. He beheld on the outside Sinister, who immediately exclaimed—"My dear sir, I must see you in private directly; for Heaven's sake follow me!"

With an apology to Miss Sommers for so abruptly quitting her, Frederick pursued the steps of his friend into the apartment appropriated to their use in the inn, which he had no sooner entered, than Sinister thus addressed him:—

"You must abate your ecstacies for a while, sir; lay aside your romance, and attend to what a lover seldom thinks of —common sense."

"Why, what is the matter?" inquired the surprised Frederick.

"Nothing less," replied Sinister, "than that your uncle is in this very house."

"My uncle!" echoed Frederick.

"He is, sir, as I hope to die in my bed!" ejaculated Sinister.

"The devil!" exclaimed Frederick.

"No,

"No, sir, the general," returned Sinister; "for the love of yourself, preserve common decency of expression!"

"The general in this house!" repeated Frederick.

"Why yes, I tell you," answered Sinister, "and we must get out of it as soon as possible. I must, first of all, settle the business of procuring substitutes for us in the play; for without that the landlady will not suffer us to cross her threshold; and if we act, *you* offend past forgiveness; besides, we cannot depart whilst your uncle is here, without providing some means for occupying his attention whilst we slip off; both of which necessities I am much mistaken if I shall not be able to provide for under one head—so run you up stairs—pack up our luggage—have it ready as quickly as possible, and I will be with you in less than a quarter of an hour."

"But that divine actress of whom I

have spoken to you?" said Frederick, hesitatingly.

"Oh, you can't leave her behind you," returned Sinister. "Well then, let her pack up her luggage, and trot off with us; enough for two—enough for three; we shall never fare the worse for sharing what we have with a woman who loves us."

"But she is not a woman thus easily satisfied," replied Frederick; "she is of birth equal to my own."

"All the better!" exclaimed Sinister; "we shall find her much better-mannered than if she were not; the lower a woman's situation in life, the greater the airs she gives herself on a little notice from our sex."

"But notice will not content her," replied Frederick; "I tell you she must be honourably dealt with."

"That is troublesome," answered Sinister; "but if it is for your happiness,

I can

I can have no objection to submit. At all events you perceive we must quit this place—so you had better see her again directly; and if your passion is as violent as you describe it, settle matters with her in the best manner you are able, to your own satisfaction. But really it is a pity she is such a good kind of a woman."

"No, it is not, Sinister," rejoined Frederick; "I could never love where it was not creditable to me to become a husband: therefore, if you desire my happiness, you must rejoice in her purity of heart." He followed this declaration by expressing his intention of once more seeing her, and left the room for that purpose.

Sinister now rang the bell, and desired Mrs. Clatter to be informed that he wished to speak to her. In a few seconds she came into the room—"At your service, sir," said the voluble hostess.

"My

"My dear ma'am," solemnly pronounced Sinister, "I am grieved on your account to my very soul—I heartily wish I had kept the names of myself and my friend secret from you—you would not then have experienced the mortification of seeing us here, and learning that we are unable to serve you."

"How, sir!—What do you say?" exclaimed Mrs. Clatter.

"Make out our bill, if you please, ma'am; we are compelled to leave Margate this very moment," rejoined Sinister.

"Why, good lack, sir! what do you mean?" inquired the landlady.

"We must not play, ma'am," returned Sinister; "we should forfeit situations of much more consequence than you can imagine, if we were known to have done so—we durst not hazard it."

"Oh, what will become of me!" cried Mrs. Clatter; "I am ruined—I am ruined!"

"Patience,

"Patience, my dear ma'am, patience!" answered Sinister; "I have a resource for you. You have heard of Mr. Dowton, of Drury-lane Theatre, I dare say."

"Yes, I have, sir—I have," was the reply.

"He is now in your house," continued Sinister; "he came in about an hour ago, in the chaise with grey horses; he is travelling the country for the express purpose of playing at country theatres; so present him with the sum which you intended to have given to my friend and me, and you need not doubt his bringing quite as much money to your house as our united strength could have done."

"Do you think so, sir?" said the landlady.

"I am sure of it," rejoined Sinister; "the only difficulty will perhaps arise from his pretending to dislike your proposal, and not unlikely professing him-

self.

self offended at it; indeed, I should not wonder if he were to declare that he was not Mr. Dowton at all; for he has strange whims sometimes; but don't mind that—don't let that dishearten you, for it is his pride, whatever he may say to the contrary, that every body should know him, in every dress, and every situation."

"But do you think he has ever played in the Soldier's Daughter, sir?" inquired Mrs. Clatter.

"Ever played in it!" echoed Sinister; "why he has acquired the appellation of the General, from his masterly style of performing the character; and I assure you that you cannot flatter him more than to address him by the title of the General."

"Is there any thing else I can say or do to please him?" asked the landlady.

"Oh yes," answered Sinister; "he is an excellent Jew—put him in mind of

that;

that; and for a passionate old man, there is scarcely his equal—let him know you are acquainted with that also; and now I advise you to lose no time in seeing him."

"I wont, sir," returned Mrs. Clatter; "I am very sorry we can't have you and your friend perform, but a thousand thanks for your good advice."

"And remember this," cried Sinister, "if you have to drag him by main force to the theatre, it will be nothing extraordinary—he has a pride in being *compelled* to shew himself upon the boards; and let me tell you, if you don't persist in getting him there, after you have once proposed it to him, you will offend him very highly, and he will give you and your house an ill name wherever he goes."

"Oh, it shall be done, sir—it shall be done!" cried the landlady. "I know my cue, I warrant you," and with these words she bustled out of the room.

"If

" If *you* know your *cue*," thought Sinister, "it is more than your actor does;" but however he considered that the wild expedient he had pursued would, in the confusion which its execution must create, give his master and himself time for escaping from Margate, and this was all he desired from it.

He now proceeded towards his master's chamber; in his way thither he met Rebecca—" Good-bye, my dear!" he said; " I am going."

" Oh, sir, pray take me with you!" answered Rebecca.

" I shall have no objection, I assure you," replied Sinister; " but can you be ready in half a dozen minutes?"

" I am ready now, sir, to go to the play," returned Rebecca.

" But I am not going to the play," rejoined Sinister.

" And I am going nowhere else," depend upon it," was the reply.

Sinister

Sinister hesitated a few moments; he considered that as his master had talked of settling, he might as well sit down a husband too; he therefore said—"You are candid with me—I will be so with you too. I love you better than any woman I ever saw—will you run away with me, and marry me?"

"That would be doing things the wrong way, sir," answered Rebecca; "you should have asked me to marry you first, and then I might have been content to run away with you afterwards."

"I have no time for parley," rejoined Sinister; "I swear by this kiss," and he snatched one as he spoke from her ruby lips, "that my intentions are honourable now, if they never were so before. I will give you all the time I can to consider of my proposal—take ten minutes; at the end of that period I will return to this spot for my answer; and I think

—I think

—I think it will be '*Yes;*' for I don't believe you could do such injustice to your own smiling lips, as to suffer them to utter that crabbed, cross monosyllable, '*No*.'"

Having spoken these words, Sinister ran on towards his master's chamber; and Rebecca remained standing where he had quitted her, with a countenance expressive of an undecided mind.

General Tornado, meanwhile, had been taking his unquiet repast; and when it was concluded, surprised that the waiter had not brought him any information relative to his nephew, he rang the bell. A waiter, whom he had not before seen, appeared to reply to the summons, and by him he was acquainted that the young man, whom he was desirous of beholding, was gone to conduct a gentleman to the pier. Upon receiving this intelligence, the impatient general desired his friend Jackall to take a few

turns

turns before the hours, and observe whether Frederick and his companion were to be seen at any of the windows. Jackall obeyed his directions, and scarcely had he quitted him ere, with a curtsey down to the ground, Mrs. Clatter entered the apartment.—" Sir, your most obedient," simpered out the landlady; " I hope every thing in my house has been to your liking; you cannot hurt me more than by not commanding whatever my house can afford."

" Very well, good woman," replied the general, tartly.

" Pardon my intrusion, sir," returned Mrs. Clatter, " but I am in a very unpleasant situation, which it is in your power to relieve: I have a benefit, sir, to-night at the theatre in this place; I am unfortunately disappointed of two performers, of the first eminence, from London. The play is to be 'The Soldier's Daughter;' and if you would condescend

descend to sustain your favourite character——"

"Hell and devils!" cried the general, interrupting her, "what do you mean by talking to me about benefits, and theatres, and favourite characters?"

"Oh, pardon me, sir!" returned Mrs. Clatter, "we all know who you are, though you have kept your name secret; public characters, like yours, cannot conceal themselves; every body knows the general."

"Well, and suppose I am the general!" was the rejoinder.

"Ah, sir! you see a little bird has been singing in my ear," replied Mrs. Clatter; "but general is only your nickname, sir, as a body may say."

"Nickname!—general, my nickname!" cried Tornado; "it is the name I most glory in. What can be more honourable to man, than to have risen, as I have done, to a station that proves me to have

have been rewarded by elevation of rank, for having devoted my services to the good of my country?"

"Oh, I know what general means!" replied the landlady; "well, Mr. Dowton, may I say that you will consent?"

"Mr. Dowton!" reiterated the general—"Mr. Dowton! what the devil do you mean by Mr. Dowton? You may thank your stars, woman, that I am very good-tempered as well as passionate, or you might fare the worse for this mockery."

"Dear sir," rejoined Mrs. Clatter, "now, why will you disavow yourself thus? your ill temper is all pretence; for we know you are the finest old man in a passion that ever was seen."

"Blood and thunder!" ejaculated the general, "this insolence is not to be borne!—treat me like a buffoon!"

"No, no, no, sir! we know you are no buffoon; that is not your line," returned

turned Mrs. Clatter; "but nobody can deny your being one of the first Jews in the kingdom. I shall let the town know what a treat they have to expect; it is almost time for the play to begin; and if you will be indulged in your whim of being carried by force to the theatre, we shall be very proud to drag you there, with all the strength we can muster. Here, Jem! Jerry! Harry! Jack! Will! hostler! chambermaid! cook! boots!" she added, approaching the door, and bawling like a towncrier; "come here this minute, all of you, and lay hold of Mr. Dowton, and take him off to the theatre!"

"Where are my pistols?" exclaimed the general, starting from his seat; he perceived they were not in the room, and driving the landlady away from the door, he passed through it himself, adding—"You are mad, woman, and I shall look for assistance to secure you, and send you to bedlam!"

As

As he entered the passage, the tribe of servants whom Mrs. Clatter had called to her aid, attended by the tapster, the scullion, and a trio of washerwomen, appeared in obedience to her summons; and at her word of command, settled, like a flight of crows upon a joint of carrion, on the astonished and irritated general.

The denunciations of vengeance uttered by the general were now of the most violent kind; but they would probably have been unheeded, had not the door of an apartment been suddenly opened; and Frederick Rivers, who darted from it, exclaimed—"Release that gentleman at your peril; you are in an error concerning him; he is not the person you suppose him to be."

Mrs. Clatter immediately commanded her troop to obey the imagined Mr. Russell, and apologized for what she had done, by saying, that if she had

been in an error, she had been led into it by a conversation which she had had with Mr. Bannister.

Frederick led his uncle back into the parlour, which he had just quitted.

"Then you do still retain affection enough for your uncle," said the latter, "not to wish to see him pulled to pieces by a mob?"

"The filial affection which I have ever borne you, sir," replied Frederick, "has not been diminished by absence; nor should I have quitted your mansion at all, but that I considered it less undutiful to retire from your presence, than to remain in it, when my heart revolted at the execution of your commands."

"So this is your morality, is it?" exclaimed the general.

"Could the sacrifice of my life ensure the happiness of yours," returned Frederick, "it should freely be laid down

for

for you; but my liberty, the dearest privilege I possess, I cannot agree to yield up to any woman, till I am convinced that she is deserving of possessing my heart."

"Why, have not I told you that Eliza Blandford is deserving of it?" demanded the general.

"But you know the lady yourself only from report, sir," rejoined Frederick.

"You might as well have told me all this in Staffordshire!" cried the general.

"I did repeat these arguments again and again to you, sir, without effect; and as you were deaf to my remonstrances, and as I judged that it must be equally disagreeable to the daughter of your friend, sir James Blandford, to be led to the altar, in order to give her hand to a man whom she had never seen, as it could be to me to be conducted thi-

 ther,

ther, for the purpose of marrying a woman whom I did not know, I thought I could not take any step which was likely to prove more acceptable to the feelings of the lady, than by my disappearance to spare her the pain of so unpleasant a meeting."

"Fine sophistry!" exclaimed the general. "Oh, you are a pretty fellow!"

"An honest one, I assure you, sir," answered Frederick.

"I will put your honesty to the test," returned the general; "and mind this, I shall know by your countenance whether you tell me the truth. Was there no girl in the case, whom you had seen, that put you out of conceit with the idea of her whom you had not beheld?"

"No, sir," rejoined Frederick; "when I quitted Staffordshire, I can assure you, upon my honour, that my affections were disengaged."

"What

"What the devil do you mean by that?" cried the general.

"That they are not so now, sir," replied his nephew; "and that I would sooner die than give my hand to any other woman than her whose image is implanted in my heart."

The general beat the devil's tatoo with his heel, and bit his lips to check the rising bile.

"What more, my dear sir," asked Frederick, "could you desire to find in the woman whom I should present to you as your niece, than a union of mental and personal accomplishments?"

"And where is there such a one to be met with?" demanded the general.

"She who has fascinated my senses," returned Frederick, "I believe to be thus richly gifted."

"Yes, your good opinion probably arises from the fascination of your senses —I don't doubt that," said the general.

 Frederick

Frederick implored his uncle to permit him to introduce Miss Sommers to his knowledge—" For indeed," he said, " I think she is in every respect calculated to please you."

" What is her family?" asked the general.

" Of the first respectability and fortune, she has informed me," answered Frederick; " but where resident I know not."

" Where have you seen her?" inquired the general.

" Only in this place," answered Frederick; " she lives at present in this very house."

" She has friends with her, doubtless?" said the general.

" No," replied Frederick, " she has fled from her friends, in order to avoid a marriage into which she would have been forced, with a man whom her heart could not approve."

" Upon

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the general, "I don't wonder such congenial souls are drawn towards each other!"

Frederick sighed.

"And her feelings are no doubt answerable to yours?" said the general.

"Our acquaintance is short," answered Frederick; "but I believe, I hope, I trust——"

"That she can't be insensible to your excellence!" exclaimed the general: "if you have told her your story, it must be impossible but that the similarity of your romantic fate to her own must have captivated her susceptible heart." In a voice of passion he then added—"How do you know that she is not some deceitful minx of a cast-off mistress, or a dashing actress, who has made you the dupe of her arts?"

"Oh no, sir!" returned Frederick; "the artless innocence of Miss Sommers——"

"Is that her name?" asked the general.

"Yes, sir, Sommers," was the reply.

At this moment a waiter, popping his head in at the door, addressed Frederick with—"Pray, sir, do you know what is become of Miss Sommers? there is a message come from the theatre to say, it wants but ten minutes to the drawing-up of the curtain, and they can't think of beginning without the principal actress."

"Blood and thunder!" roared out the general; "then she is an actress after all?" Then turning to the waiter—"She is an actress, this girl in your house, is not she?" he added.

"Oh yes, sir," returned the waiter; "we are quite full of players to-day, as I may say; there is Miss Sommers, and you, and this gentleman, and the gentleman that came along with him; but

I must

I must look for Miss Sommers;" and away he ran.

"Me a player, and you a player!" exclaimed the general; "if I blow up the house, I will find out what these insults mean!" He burst out of the door, and no sooner had he crossed the threshold, than he beheld Sinister in conversation with Mrs. Clatter, who was pronouncing, in a whimpering voice—"I am sure it was not my fault; it was you, sir, who told me the gentleman was Mr. Dowton, of Drury-lane."

"The devil he did!" cried the general: one stride threw him upon Sinister; he seized him by the collar with one hand, and expressed his rage by doubling at him the fist of the other; of the powers of utterance the chokings of passion entirely deprived him.

His silence gave Sinister an opportunity for speaking—"After the commission of a fault, the first of virtues is

confession; you, sir, are the last man on earth whom I would offend, but Mr. Rivers is the first whom I would serve: hear my story, and you will find that in the hope of rendering him a benefit, I did not scruple to place myself in the most dangerous of situations; by which conduct I have been so close an imitator of your affectionate partiality for your nephew, that, as long as you think yourself in the right whilst labouring for his happiness, I cannot doubt that you will allow me not to have been in the wrong in the instance just past."

Thus spoke the humbly-toned Sinister. A number of spectators were collecting round them, and the general, who had still reason enough left in the midst of his passion, not to desire to see either himself or his nephew made the butt of their merriment, drove Sinister and Frederick before him into the parlour, and following them, shut the door.

Having

Having done this, he informed them that an explicit acknowledgment of past circumstances could alone entitle them, especially Sinister, to hope for his forgiveness and future favour.

Sinister, accordingly, made confession of the acting plan to which they had had recourse in their necessities, and likewise avowed the imposition which he had put upon the landlady respecting the general's character; concluding his account by saying, that "if Mrs. Clatter had possessed an atom of discrimination, she must have perceived the error into which she had been led respecting his profession."

It was not the nature of general Tornado to carry his resentment beyond the repentance of the offender. He maintained silence; he stroked his beard; kicked about his right leg, which was crossed over his left; and seemed prepared to say—"Go home with me, both

of you, and play no more of these tricks, and I will forget what is past."

Frederick understood what his agitation meant, and addressed him with—"you will allow me once more to shake that hand which has so often pressed mine in friendship and affection—will you not, my dear uncle?"

Frederick took his hand; for some moments the general suffered him to hold it in his unpressed; at length, nipping it heartily between his fingers—"I am a fool—I must be an old fool," he exclaimed, "to be so damned passionate, and at the same time so very good-tempered!"

"And may I hope that your forgiveness will be extended to me, sir?" asked the bowing Sinister.

"You may hope for any thing," replied the general, "but to escape with your life, if you ever encourage my boy to run away from his doting old uncle again,

again, when I have once got him back to the old Hall in Staffordshire!"

"With what pleasure should I return thither," cried Frederick, "if Miss Blandford were a wife!"

"Or yourself a husband, sir," said Sinister.

"But whether I insist upon your giving your hand to Miss Blandford or not," ejaculated the general, "marry an actress you shall not; I will have no stage frippery transplanted into my family; I am resolved—firmly resolved, and therefore the sooner we quit this place the better."

"But, my dear uncle," rejoined Frederick, "as circumstances have erroneously caused both you and myself to be mistaken for theatrical performers, may not some like error have led me to believe Miss Sommers an actress? I have her own word, that she has never yet appeared upon a stage: the urgency of

necessity

necessity may be compelling her to a step which she dislikes; as she has abandoned her friends, she may perhaps be reduced to indigence; in which case I am certain that your benevolent heart would derive happiness from administering to her relief: as an individual in need of the offices of friendship, allow me to introduce her to you."

As the general did not verbally dissent from his nephew's petition, Frederick immediately went in quest of Miss Sommers, and Sinister followed him out of the room, happy thus easily to have escaped the lash of correction.

The general continued upon his seat, wrapt in reflection; the happiness of his adored nephew had ever been the darling object of his life; and if he enforced the plan which he had projected for his felicity, it appeared that he should be laying up in store, for both himself and Frederick, a series of undoubted misery.

He

He believed, that if Frederick were not to marry Miss Blandford, he could not do better than to return a husband into Staffordshire, as the knowledge of his hand being disposed of must at least put a period to the solicitations of sir James Blandford, for the execution of the agreement into which the general and he had entered respecting their daughter and nephew, although the nonadherence of the general to his engagement might incense his wrath. He wished that the choice of his nephew had fallen on any woman rather than an actress, for he felt that the force of fashion would never reconcile him to receive a public performer as his niece. Whilst he sat debating thus with his own mind, the door of the apartment was opened by a waiter, who said—"I hope, sir, you wont have any objection to my shewing a gentleman in here a few minutes; but our house is so full, we really have not a

room

room to offer; you may depend upon it, sir, he is quite a gentleman, for he travels in his own carriage."

Before the general had time to reply, the gentleman of whom the waiter had spoken entered the apartment; he was dressed in boots, leather breeches, a blue frock-coat, a silk kerchief wound round his neck, and a brown bob-wig and white hat on his head. The general raised his eyes to his countenance, and, to his surprise, beheld in him his friend, sir James Blandford.

This Shropshire baronet was a true fox-hunting squire—proud only of his stud and his wealth, and without any idea beyond the view-hollow. For the last twelve years he had been a widower, and from the period of her mother's death, to the day at which he had summoned her home to become the wife of Frederick Rivers, his daughter had been placed at a boarding-school; and thus

deprived of female society—that first softener of the human heart, his manners, before uncouth, had acquired additional coarseness.—"Hey-day, general!" cried sir James, "by what miracle do I find you here?"

"Sir James!" exclaimed the general. "I may return that question to you."

"Why, as our families are to be united," replied the baronet, "secrecy between us would be a folly; I am come down here—but don't be disheartened at what I am going to tell you."

The general did not speak, and after a few moments pause, sir James continued—"May I never set foot on fallow-land, if my daughter Eliza has not run away from me—left her home to avoid becoming the wife of your nephew: yes, she has!—but don't let it dishearten you, as I said before; I have got scent of her, and they shall soon be coupled, I warrant me!"

"Why," rejoined the general, "I don't think yours by any means a warrantable conclusion; our being old friends is no reason why we should make old fools of ourselves, and unhappy wretches of the beings who are dependent on our will: my nephew has run away from *me*—has left *his* home, to avoid the same ceremony; so, as they can't like one another before marriage——"

"Odds life, man!" cried sir James, interrupting him, "why it is what they must expect after marriage, or have much better luck than their neighbours, ain't it? They are only, as one may say, walking over the course before the race. Bridget and I did the same; and for all that, I never laid the hazel across her back above twice in my life!"

"What!" ejaculated the general, "strike your wife!—treat your wife as you would one of the hounds of your

pack!—

pack!—stoop to the meanness of laying your hand upon a woman!"

"Well," rejoined the baronet, "I never went beyond the bounds of the law; I always took care the twig was not thicker than my thumb."

"And sooner than my boy should follow your example," answered the general, "I would see him in his coffin, and leave my estate to build an hospital for fools!"

"Well," replied sir James, "that is neither wind nor weather to what we are talking about: remember our engagement—married they must be."

"Why, don't you think," returned the general, "that we must have been two precious wiseacres to enter into such an agreement—to suppose, that because we were friends, our descendants must be lovers?—what, in the name of war, could we have been dreaming of at the time?"

"Why,

"Why, the union of our estates, certainly," answered sir James.

"But I have woke from my lethargy," rejoined the general; "and I now think that a man must be but little better than a brute, who can resolve to make rational beings unhappy for the sake of joining acres together."

"Well, I think no such thing," cried the baronet.

"Ay, very likely you may not," replied the general, pointedly; "you have laid the hazel twig across your wife's shoulders!"

"What, do you mean to say that you will break your word—neglect to fulfil an engagement entered into twenty years ago?" exclaimed sir James.

"Long ago as it is," returned the general, "I have hardly had time enough to see it was wrong; a hasty flash of reason convinced me of it."

"Hasty determinations are good for nothing,"

nothing," cried sir James, "and moreover discredit both a man's heart and understanding, when he suffers them to overturn the resolutions which he made in honesty and friendship. But I am not to be fooled—I am not to be put upon! So mark me, general, the moment I have found my girl, if you do not bring forth your nephew, and either send for the priest to them, or send them to the priest, it shall be the worst day's work for you that ever you did in your life. I can be as passionate as you, when I see occasion."

"Only you have not my good-humour to back your passion," retorted the general.

"Oh, damn your perverse arguments!" ejaculated the baronet; "frowning on one side of your face, and laughing on the other! My daughter is in this town; I will go this instant in pursuit of her; and the moment I have her once again

within

within the crack of my whip——" Whilst speaking, he had advanced towards the door of the apartment, which the moment he had opened, he appeared to be suddenly struck dumb, and retired precipitately back into the room, as if he had beheld a spectre.

But whatever had been the impression produced on his senses by the rencontre, the beings who met his observation were not aerial forms; they were those of the sublunary Frederick Rivers and Miss Sommers.

When Frederick had a short time before quitted his uncle, he had inquired at the bar for Miss Sommers, and learnt that she had set out with the intention of going to the theatre, but that upon some alarm which she had met with in the street, she had returned hastily home, and shut herself up in her apartment.

Thither Frederick accordingly proceeded,

ceeded, and with some difficulty obtained admittance. He found Miss Sommers in tears, and in the most affectionate accents inquired the cause of her grief.

"In my way to the theatre," she replied, "I met a person whom I fear, and under the dread of whose resentment I am now trembling. My only hope rests on the belief which I entertain of his not having beheld me."

"You must at this instant need a protector," said Frederick.

Miss Sommers sighed.

"The guardianship of a young man, like myself," rejoined Frederick, "may want that weight which may be requisite for your defence against an irritated relative; and such, from what you have already told me of your circumstances, I cannot doubt to be the person whom you have just beheld, and whom you are endeavouring to avoid seeing again."

Miss

Miss Sommers confessed that his suspicions were just.

"My uncle, of whom I have spoken to you," rejoined Frederick, "is in this house; I am reconciled to him; he is a man advanced in years, of a solid judgment, of affectionate manners, and of an excellent disposition; he is the friend of his fellow-beings: he will, I am assured, be happy to afford you any service in your difficulties, and to give you his countenance in your present dilemma; and should your relative discover you here, the lenity which my uncle has shewn to my truant flight from beneath his roof, may perhaps induce him, by the force of example, to extend forgiveness to your error."

The trembling Miss Sommers, too violently agitated in mind to have an opinion of her own, and happy to find any friend in her present forlorn state, suffered Frederick to lead her towards

the apartment where he had left general Tornado, and at the door of which they arrived at the critical moment which we have just described.

As they entered the room, the eyes of Miss Sommers fell upon sir James Blandford; she started, uttered a faint shriek, and fell, half-fainting, upon the shoulder of Frederick.

"Well, why don't you go in pursuit of your daughter?" asked the general, addressing sir James; "nobody here wants to detain you."

"Pursuit of my daughter!" echoed the baronet; "why, that is my daughter!—there she stands."

"And is this your Miss Sommers?" inquired the general of his nephew.

Frederick replied in the affirmative.

"Damme, but this is the best ambuscade I ever met with in my life!" exclaimed the general, bursting, as he spoke, into a hearty fit of laughter.

"You are very civil, upon my soul!" cried sir James, "ha, ha, ha! Indeed! Is that the first salutation you give to your niece that is to be?" Then turning to Frederick—"What business have you with my daughter, you impertinent rascal?" he added. "Let go her hand, I say."

"And is that the first salutation you give to your son that is to be," returned the general, "to call him an impertinent rascal?"

"That your nephew!" ejaculated the baronet; "it cannot be."

"So you may think," replied the general; "but I never heard of any cause my sister gave her husband to doubt his being so."

"Why, what a business is this!" cried sir James; "may I never start game again, if, in order to avoid each other, the two simpletons have not run into one another's arms!" And such

had

had truly been the issue of their mutual adventures.

Miss Blandford, on her return to her father's house, from the seminary at which she had been educated, not doubting that the husband to whom he had resolved to unite her was a being similar to the society with whom she saw his hours invariably passed, and against whom her strongest disgust was excited —without a mother to protect her from falling the victim of her father's harsh resolves—without any female friend or relative to whose advice she could submit herself, she had rashly resolved to fly from her father's roof, and to live indebted for her future subsistence to her own endeavours, rather than to unite her fate with that of a man who divided his time between the chase and the bottle; and that her intended husband was of this order of human beings, her father's companions, we have already

ready said, had impressed her with the idea.

Thus determined, her first object had been to remove herself, as far as possible, from her father's abode, and to change her name; these she had accomplished, in calling herself Sommers, and in reaching Margate. How she was to live was her next consideration; and having, like all boarding-school pupils of her sex, acquired a great taste for novel-writing and play-acting, and judging that the latter was the less laborious undertaking of the two, she had engaged herself upon trial to the manager, and was proceeding to her *débût* upon the public boards, when her eye fell on the carriage of her father, drawn by hack-horses; the sight overpowered her, and disqualified her for her appearance on the stage—she returned in wretchedness and fear to her inn.

Sir James having traced her flight from Shropshire to Margate, was prepared

pared to treat her with all the severity of which he judged her to be deserving, for having dared to think and to act for herself, in disobedience of his imperious commands; the tide of his passion was, however, turned by his learning who was the young man whom he now beheld with his daughter; and after a few sentences of explanation had passed between them, a general reconciliation of the parties, as may naturally be concluded, took place.

The happiness of Frederick and his Eliza may be easily imagined; and not less pleased with the event of past circumstances were general Tornado and sir James Blandford. In a mood for mirth, they all repaired to pass their evening at the theatre, where the London performers, whom Mrs. Clatter had expected, were already arrived, and whose representation of their respective characters drew forth that admiration

and applause which their talents never fail to command. A substitute had been found for the supposed Miss Sommers in the widow Cheerly, and Eliza never experienced greater satisfaction than was, on cool reflection, derived to her, from the trial to which she had been voluntarily about to expose herself being spared her.

After spending a few days at Margate, enjoying the various amusements of that gay scene, the whole party set out on their return to the midland counties, in much better humour with themselves and each other, than when they had left their respective homes. A few weeks after, every preliminary being arranged, to the satisfaction of the elders, and with every prospect of felicity to the younger, Frederick was blessed with the hand of his Eliza, when as perfect felicity as is the lot of erring mortals was the portion of their terrestrial existence.

Sinister

Sinister was unable to forget the black eyes of the little barmaid; and in return for his faithful services, Frederick established him in an inn in the neighbourhood of his own residence; where, in the enjoyment of his Rebecca's smiles, he emulated the happiness of his friend and master.

READ YOUR BIBLE.

A Tale of Admonition.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

SHAKESPEARE.

READ YOUR BIBLE.

"I WONDER the boys are not come home," said Absolom Earnest, as he sat smoking his pipe one evening in the parlour at the back of his shop, and fixing his eyes as he spoke on the dial of a timepiece which was suspended over the chimney, and of which the hands pointed to the hour of ten; "I wonder the boys are not come home."

Absolom Earnest was a rich old linen-draper on Fish-street-hill, and the boys of whom he spoke were his two sons,

 and

and only children, named Everard and Valentine; the elder of whom was in his seventeenth, and the latter in his sixteenth year, and whom he had that day treated with a ride to Epsom races.

"I dare say they will soon arrive," replied his companion, a lovely girl, named Clara Dorville, who was an orphan, his distant relative, and who, since the death of his wife, had been the regulator of his domestic affairs; and scarcely was her supposition uttered, ere the parties referred to entered the apartment.

"Welcome home, cousins!" said Clara. "How have you been entertained?"

"Exquisitely!—delightfully!" answered Valentine. "Such sport on the turf, every body declared they had not seen a better day's running for some time; and then such beauty and fashion on the course! I declare I could pass my whole life at a race, if it was like this."

"And

"And I," said Everard, "never wish to revisit a spot for which I cannot perceive one useful or profitable motive for which people are drawn thither."

"Why, you would not have people carry their ledgers to a race-course, would you?" returned Valentine, laughing; "nor yet go abroad for pleasure in the same sour faces that they often cast up their mercantile accounts with?"

"I would have no one, at any moment of his life," replied Everard, "divested of that necessary prudence which tends to the improvement of our time and means."

"Oh, the prudent Mr. Thomas Inkle!" jeeringly pronounced Valentine.

"Oh, the hair-brained Harry Dornton!" sarcastically answered Everard.

The old gentleman smiled at the contrast of their ideas, and said—"I suppose you will hardly indulge me in my wish; but I should like to be informed

how

how you each disposed of the guinea a-piece which I gave you this morning, in addition to your travelling expences?"

"Oh, I have had the greatest luck in the world with mine!" exclaimed Valentine; "most incredible good fortune! I put down fifteen shillings of it at an E O table, and would you believe it, I won ten pounds. I am sure I shall be an adventurer for the smiles of fortune as long as I live."

"And what have you done with yours?" inquired old Earnest of his eldest son.

"I have kept it unchanged," was the reply; "Valentine has certainly made very good percentage of his money; but his doing so was only a chance, and I shall always consider it the wisest conduct to preserve a certainty."

Old Absolom laid down his pipe, and sunk into silent thought. The two brothers retired to rest, and Clara Dorville

passed half the night in reflecting whether a miser or a spendthrift promised to make the better husband—a consideration to which she was drawn by the marked attentions which both the youths had constantly been in the habit of paying her, and by the confession which she had again and again been compelled to make to her own heart, that she liked both so well, she knew not which to prefer.

Time moved on, and its progress witnessed old Absolom Earnest retired from business, his son Everard placed at the head of a mercantile concern, of which he was the sole proprietor, and Valentine in possession of a captain's commission, when information reached the brothers, that their father, whose infirm state of health had tempted him to make trial of the Bristol waters, had died suddenly at Clifton.

Whatever might individually be the foibles

foibles of his two sons, they were not deficient in filial affection, and both immediately set out, to be present at the interment of their parent; and the ceremony being past, they were called upon to attend their father's confidential friend and lawyer, Mr. Winkfield, in a private apartment, and read his will. Having believed him to have been extremely wealthy, great was their astonishment, when informed by the commencing paragraph of his testament, that one thousand pounds was all the funded property of which he had died possessed, an equal division of which he directed to be made between them. The furniture of his house in London he commanded to be peremptorily sold, in order to defray the expences of his funeral, and the residue of the money to be appropriated to the future maintenance of his relation, Clara Dorville.

Great as was the surprise with which they

they were affected, they perceived it to be a case for which there was no redress; and when Mr. Winkfield considered their spirits sufficiently tranquillized to grant him their attention, he proceeded to inform them that he was in possession of two parcels, sealed up in writing-paper, which he had been commanded by their late parent to deliver to them after his death. The parcels were produced, and found to be directed, in the handwriting of their father, the one to Everard, the other to Valentine Earnest.

Everard was the first who tore off the envelope which bore his name, and found it to enclose a small ivory box, the lid of which was firmly secured; and upon a paper affixed to it was inscribed —"*Do not break open this box till you are at the last extremity of want.*"

Valentine now unsealed the cover addressed to himself, and discovered within it a well-known volume, bound in

morocco,

morocco, which his late father had always denominated the family Bible; and upon a paper attached to it was written—"*Read your Bible.*"

They both considered the circumstance as an extraordinary one, but regarded it as the whim of a superannuated man; and each requested Mr. Winkfield to take their bequests into his possession, till they should require them at his hands.

It is undoubtedly a very awkward sensation which is communicated to the mind, when it is obliged to lower its expectations from the receipt of twenty thousand pounds into five hundred; but it is in vain to argue against the will of fate, or to question the decrees of the deceased; and conscious of the value of appearances in life, Everard returned to his counting-house, and Valentine to his regiment, with as good spirits and as pleasant countenances as it was possible

for

for them to assume under the present existing circumstances; while Clara retired on her scanty pittance, to share the humble habitation of a friend in the country.

As time rolled on, every revolving season found the thoughts of Everard and Valentine Earnest busied with plans to repair to themselves the imaginary loss which they had sustained; Everard plodding by day and by night, and almost proving himself an economist upon economy; and Valentine, confidently believing that fortune had some extensive prize in store for him, of which the ten pounds won at Epsom races had been permitted him as a prognostic, devoting himself with equal constancy to the health and heart-rending toil of a gamester's existence.

Nearly four years elapsed, during which the brothers saw little of one another, knew less of each other's concerns, and

and became daily more deeply entangled in the web of their own spinning. At length the daring and unsuccessful speculations of Everard placed his name in the Gazette, and his person in a debtor's apartment in White Cross prison.

He had been there only a short time when he was one day surprised by a visit from Clara Dorville. He had not seen her since the period of his father's interment, and he was considerably struck by the alteration which had taken place in her appearance. Her dress had hitherto been always plain, but elegant in its simplicity; it was now composed of the meanest materials, and even those were become shabby from use.—" Oh, Everard!" she exclaimed, " could I ever have believed that we should have met in a place like this, and under the circumstances by which we are both assailed?"

" I never despair," replied Everard; " perseverance

"perseverance and economy will carry a man through almost every difficulty; it is true that my involvements are considerable, but I trust not irretrievable; but from what cause do I behold you thus changed?"

"Alas!" replied Clara, "the supposed friends with whom I went to reside at your father's death, have treated me with the greatest perfidy: I permitted them the use of the slender sum which was paid to me by Mr. Winkfield after the sale of your father's effects, and they have fled abroad with it, and left me utterly destitute."

"And what has brought you to London?" inquired Everard.

"My motive in coming hither," replied Clara, "was to lay my wretched case before you and your brother, as the only relatives, the only intimate acquaintances, whom I possess; and, in short, for why should I withhold what

I came

I came purposely to reveal—to cast myself upon your humanity? I have, at this moment, neither a roof under which I can shelter my head, nor the means of procuring myself a day's subsistence."

Everard paused a few moments in thought, then said—"You are doubtless so fortunate as to know where Valentine is to be found, though I do not."

"Indeed I am not," answered Clara.

"That is truly unlucky," replied Everard, "for he might have been able to grant you that assistance which you must perceive that it is utterly out of my power to afford you."

"Were he still in the army," returned Clara, "the agent of his regiment would be able to direct me to him; but the last I heard of him was, that he had sold his commission, to pay his debts of honour."

"Honour! thoughtless fellow!" ejaculated Everard; "and for myself, you must

must understand that I can have nothing to offer you, who am myself existing on the pittance of an imprisoned debtor."

"I wish to remind you of a circumstance," said Clara, "which, in the hurry of your spirits, has not perhaps recurred to your recollection—the box bequeathed to you by your father, which you were to open at your last extremity of want."

"Oh, yes, I have recollected it," he replied; "but I am here obliged to be supplied with a maintenance; and whilst that is the case, I cannot be at the last extremity of want."

"But reflect, pray reflect," returned Clara, "how wretched is my situation, who do not even possess the trifling advantage by which you are defended from perishing; if you could be prevailed upon to open that box, it might perhaps afford you not only the means of succour-

ing

ing me, but of relieving yourself from your present entanglements."

"I have resolved to adhere peremptorily to the terms on which it was bequeathed to me," calmly replied Everard.

"Then beggary alone awaits me," answered Clara. "It is a cruel resolution which you have formed, and one to which worlds would not have tempted me, could our situations have been reversed: senseless as you appear to my unhappy fate, my heart feels for you—most keenly feels for the want of humanity with which it beholds you steeled against the miseries of others, at the very moment when you are yourself an object of pity and humiliation in the eyes of the reflective part of society. I go forth to meet the horrors of a defenceless female's state, to which you destine me, and am upheld in my wretchedness by only one consolation, which is the knowledge,

knowledge, that I cannot meet a severer repulse in my applications for charity from a stranger, than I have experienced from my friend and relative;" and with these words she indignantly retired from his presence.

Although the brothers were utterly ignorant of each other's situation, Valentine was at this very period an inhabitant of a contiguous apartment in the same prison in which his brother was detained, and, on quitting Everard, Clara immediately presented herself before Valentine.

After expressing his surprise, as Everard had done, at her altered appearance, and, in return, listened to her little tale of woe—"Oh, my dear Clara," he exclaimed—"friend of my youth—partner of my boyish sorrows and delights, the grief which I at this moment experience, arises from my inability to administer in the manner I could wish to thy necessities.

ties. I know that I deserve what I am myself suffering; I perceive too late the folly of a spendthrift's course, and the criminality of a gamester's life, and I bow to the rod which smites me; but for thee, what can I do?—what means can I pursue to render thee the alleviation which my heart bleeds to afford thee?"

"Have you, in your present necessity, consulted Mr. Winkfield?" inquired Clara.

"Not yet," replied Valentine; "but I hope that he will shortly visit me; I have dispatched a note to him, informing him of my misfortune, and expressing a wish to see him; I have also requested him to send my poor father's legacy; my heart is softened by adversity, and I feel that it will not be less a consolation to me at this trying moment, to be in actual possession of his bequest, than to pursue the advice by which it

was

was accompanied. But comfort yourself, if possible, my dearest Clara," he added; "for till he arrives to aid me with his counsel, no power on earth shall withhold me from sharing with you the slender pittance which the law allows me."

In the course of a few minutes, a servant of the prison entered the apartment with a packet, which contained the well-known family Bible, and a note from Mr. Winkfield, which informed Valentine that he would see him in the course of the day.

Valentine gazed tenderly on the book; as he viewed it, various recollections of happier hours arose to his mind, and a tear fell from his eye.—"This volume, Clara," he said, "I now value as the representative of that excellent parent whose advice I so bitterly regret having spurned; but much as I covet its possession, if no other means of administer-

ing to your wants can be devised, it shall be sold for the purpose of procuring you a temporary relief; were my father here to witness the action, he could not but approve the motive by which it is prompted."

Clara took his hand, and pressed it in hers, whilst a gleam of mingled joy and exultation illumined her expressive and animated countenance. The other hand of Valentine was laid upon the sacred volume, and opening it as he spoke, he said—"There was one particular chapter in the Testament, I think in the Epistle of St. James, to which my father always especially directed the attention of my brother and myself, and said that the precepts which it contained afforded an ample rule for the life of youth. I partially recollect its import, but not so well as I ought. I believe," he added, turning the leaves to the passage in question, "that it was either the third or fourth

fourth chapter," when a sudden start shook his frame; his eye fixed itself intently on the book, and an emotion of the greatest surprise was depicted on his countenance, for he beheld, affixed to the leaf for which he had been searching, a paper in the handwriting of his father, which contained these words:—" Since you have resolved to read your Bible, I trust that you are sufficiently reformed to be entrusted with the use of riches; apply yourself therefore to Clara Dorville, and she will inform you where they are to be found."

The consternation with which the mind of Valentine was affected, may be readily imagined; he turned an eye of eager inquiry upon Clara, and the smile which he saw depicted upon her countenance convinced him, that whatever the existing mystery, she was capable of unfolding it.

Clara was beginning her explanation,

 when

when Mr. Winkfield appeared, and perceiving that Valentine had discovered the secret of his fate, assisted her in removing the veil by which it had hitherto been obscured.

Absolom Earnest had with sorrow perceived the growing dispositions of his two sons: the miser and the spendthrift he equally disliked; and judging no means so likely to reclaim them from their ruling passion, as being made to suffer for its indulgence, reported himself to die in poverty, when his wealth in reality infinitely exceeded the calculations which his sons had formed of his possessions. Clara Dorville and Mr. Winkfield had been made the confidants of his plan; and it had been ordained by him, on his deathbed, that at the moment of their greatest need, Clara should step in, and probe the hearts of his two sons, in the manner which we have already witnessed. The event had ful-

filled the prophetic fears of their deceased father; the miser had evinced himself incapable of that feeling, in which the unthinking spendthrift had displayed himself abundant.

With tears of gratitude, Valentine applauded the foresight, and blessed the memory of his father; and in disclaiming the errors of his past life, sighed only for a monitress like Clara Dorville, to restrain the effervescences of his future feelings with her salutary example and advice.

Clara had long since withdrawn all tender regard from Everard; and accustomed to think tenderly only of the sons of her guardian, it had rested indivisibly on Valentine.

A short time only had elapsed, ere means were pursued by Mr. Winkfield for conveying intelligence of Valentine's good fortune to his brother, and his acquaintance with the fact was immedi-

ately followed by his sending to request of Mr. Winkfield the box which had been left him by his father; and not doubting that it would be found to contain information equally grateful to his feelings as that with which his brother had already been greeted, he, with an impatient hand, forced open the lid; but the surprise conveyed to his feelings was only equalled by the disappointment with which it was accompanied, on perusing a slip of paper, which formed its sole contents, and which contained these words—"Mr. Winkfield is authorized to solve your present debts; and when he has done so, to pay you annually the sum of two hundred pounds, which stipend will be increased in proportion as you are proved to share your possessions with the needy."

Need it be added, that Everard could not impel himself to give, even though a reward was appointed to his benevolence;

lence; and that whilst Valentine lived happy in himself, and doubly happy in the communication of felicity to others, Everard suffered hourly under an increase of self-inflicted privations, and ultimately died, to prove the truth of that axiom, which declares, that every vice may be rooted from the heart of man, except the vice of avarice?

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